



Erasmus+

TNA REPORT ON INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION FOR IMMIGRANTS IN POSTAL SECTOR

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT NO 1

Prepared by the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)

In Collaboration with:

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1. Introduction: Short Description of the Project

The EU postal sector accounts for €91 billion or 0.72% of EU GDP (letter post alone accounts for €44 billion or 0.34 percent of the GDP, and the number of letters was 82 billion).

In 2011, Belgium, Austria and Sweden had the highest turnover from the domestic postal sector in relation to GDP (0.6 %), while Bulgaria remains the country with the lowest domestic postal sector turnover to GDP ratio. Compared with 2004, the turnover from the domestic postal sector as a proportion of GDP fell for most countries (Figure 1-1).

In 2011, Hungary had the highest postal services sector proportion of total employment (0.8 %), followed by Finland and Belgium (both 0.7 %). The lowest proportions were observed in Bulgaria and Greece (both 0.2 %) and Portugal (0.3 %) (Figure 1-2).

Generally, domestic postal turnover is growing more slowly than gross domestic product (GDP) while the proportion of postal employment is decreasing. The number of letters sent per capita is declining in most countries but high level of on-time delivery of priority letters is observed (Eurostat 2014).

Postal services play a key role in an effective and dynamic EU Single Market and they are of crucial importance to businesses and EU citizens alike. The European Commission works on improving the quality of delivery and access to postal services, and aims to complete a well-functioning Single Market for postal services.

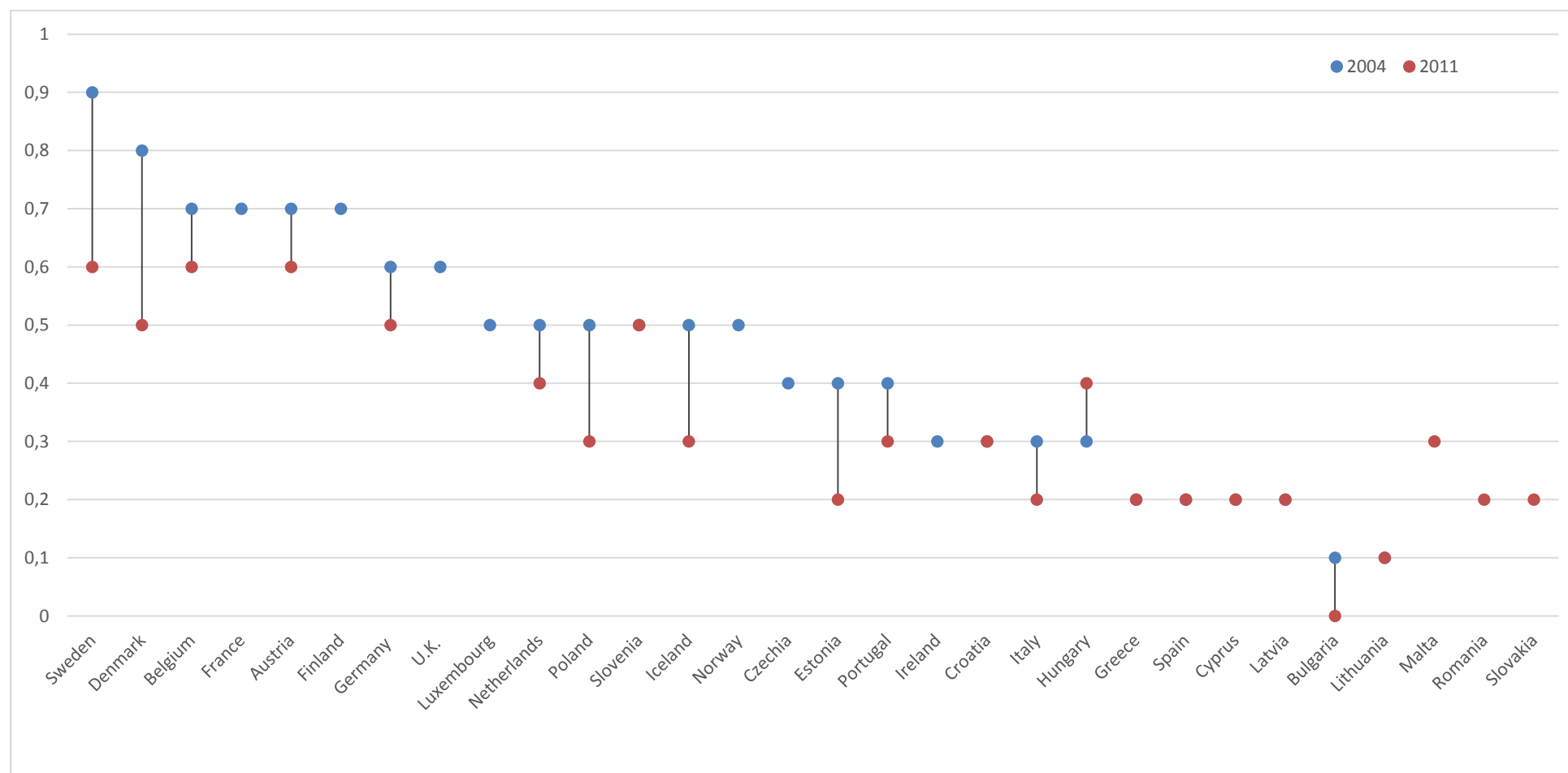
However, the postal sector is currently in a period of profound change. Technological developments, challenges to the traditional economic model, liberalization, new customer expectations and significant shifts in consumption patterns are all factors that are pushing Posts to re-invent themselves. Both employers and trade unions have recognized an increased requirement for flexibility and efficiency of the workforce. However, both sides have also recalled that efficiency should also be closely

interlinked with quality of service and customer orientation based on the employees' know-how. Indeed, employees are an essential part of the unique selling opportunities that postal operators have and contribute to build trust in the contact with customers. The adaptation of skills and competences can be considered as an essential answer to manage the changes in and challenges for the sector.

It is also true that EU is facing a considerable migration crisis which results in a considerable increase of third country nationals and refugees living in EU member states. All member states are struggling for their integration. More effective integration of migrants can make an important contribution to the target identified by the EU 2020 Strategy to reduce by 20 million the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

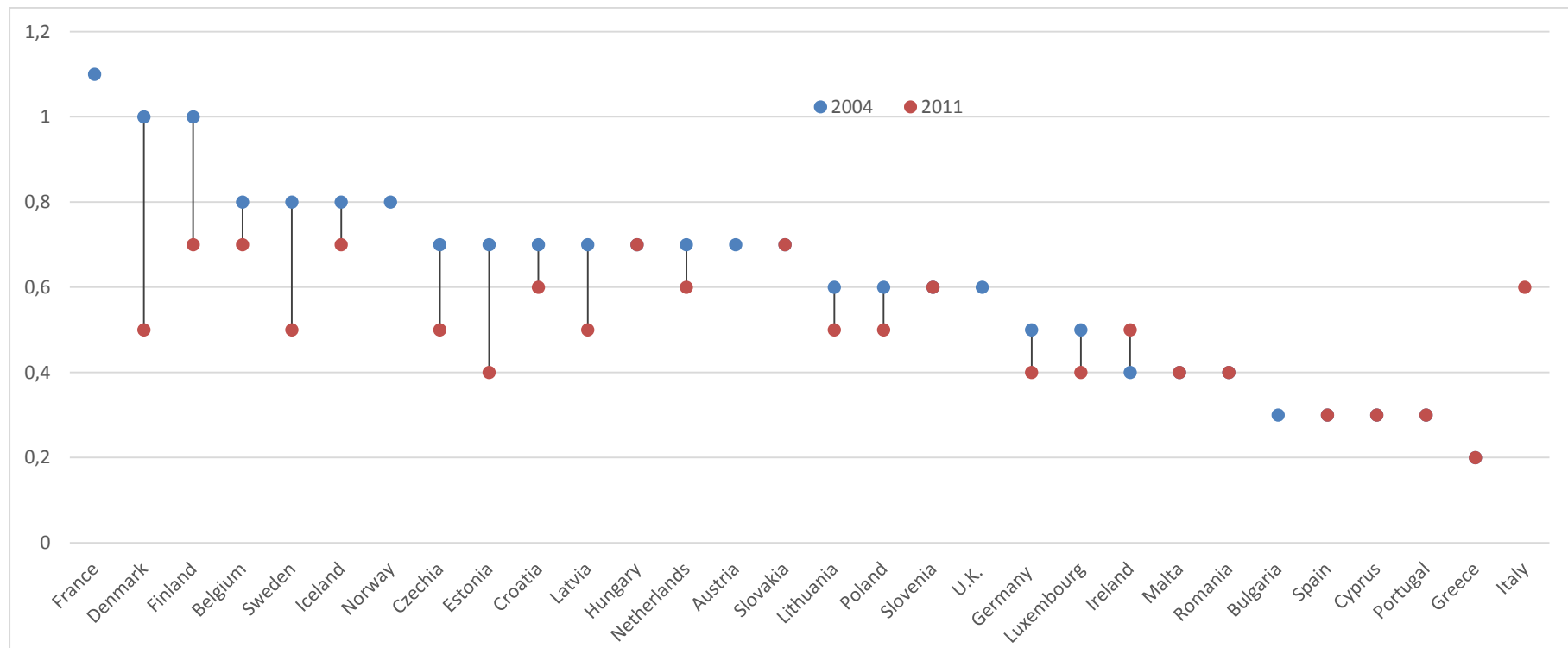
In order to constitute a genuine instrument for the integration into society in which they live, long-term residents should enjoy equality of treatment with citizens of the Member State in a wide range of economic and social matters. Additionally, as the Commission pointed out in its Communication of 7 April 2016, “national economic and social policies will need to cater for the recent inflow of third-country migrants and refugees”, to provide for their immediate needs and their active participation into society. Immigrants and newly-arrived refugees face problems, including cultural and language barriers and risks of stigmatization in education and other social activities that do prevent them from a more active participation in host societies.

Figure 1-1 Domestic turnover (% of GDP) of the European postal market, 2004 and 2011



Source: Eurostat (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Postal_service_statistics_-_universal_service_providers)

Figure 1-2 Domestic employment (% of total) of the European postal market, 2004 and 2011



Source: Eurostat (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Postal_service_statistics_-_universal_service_providers)

Within this context, it becomes critical to establish initiatives that increase social inclusion and improve the quality of delivery and access to postal services. To achieve that, the project aims to provide a solution establishing a multicultural environment within the post offices and design a joint curricula, aiming at training post employees to deliver services within this multicultural environment. In any sense, immigrants in a foreign country find it difficult to live with diversity, to transact and to do business with “unknown” people in unfamiliar environments. This misunderstanding usually exists within local citizens and is generated by the lack of knowledge of the “other”.

In view of this fact, Cultural Mediators as professionals will be trained to facilitate relations between local and foreign citizens and to promote reciprocal knowledge and comprehension have the ability to promote social and working inclusion aimed at favoring a positive relationship between persons of different cultural backgrounds.

Our training program is going to include soft skills and language skills and target indirectly third country nationals that will learn about the post services. This results to social and professional development of our target group, embracing migrants and refugees into our societies, through social integration.

The objectives of the project are summarized below:

- 1) Combating discrimination and stereotypes through “people to people” provision of postal service centered on a better acknowledgment of the richness of multicultural identity in Europe;
- 2) Foster social inclusion by organizing an environment where immigrants will feel “welcomed” and can have access to several services
- 3) Improve the quality of services provided to immigrants.
- 4) Enhance Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications (Europass Certificate) related to the postal sector.

There are four main target groups that are going to be addressed:

1. Post office employees current and future
2. Local and rural societies, where social inclusion is going to be enhanced
3. Public administration and organizations that are delivering services to migrants, since they are going to be provided cost effectively within a controlled environment.
4. Immigrants population

Cultural Mediators as post professionals will be trained to facilitate relations between local and foreign citizens and to promote reciprocal knowledge and comprehension, social and working inclusion aimed at favoring a positive relationship between persons of different cultural backgrounds. To meet the requirements of their role, Cultural Mediators must possess a combination of formal and non-formal skills and competences when communication with immigrants, that can only be developed with a combination of formal training and practical experience. Thus, the main characteristic elements of Cultural Mediators e- training will be communication competence, active listening, social perceptiveness, service orientation and, monitoring, good knowledge of both the hosting country and country of origin (culture, laws, traditions, etc.) and language knowledge.

More analytically the first Intellectual output results are described below:

Tasks included in I.O.1:

- Responsible Partner: EKKE
- Task 1: Understanding the situation. A comparative approach on the provision of post services to third country nationals in Europe. Design of a TNA research protocol (including methodology and tools).
- Task 2: Implementation of a desk research including institutional analysis and identification of best practices.

Partners are going to participate, based on the methodology provided as a result of Task 1.

- Task 3: Implementation of a field research including a qualitative and quantitative analysis

Evidence gathered per country / by each partner.

- Task 4: Synthesis of a TNA report

Final report is drafted by EKKE with the support of all partners.

2. Literature Review: Need for Intercultural mediation, definitions and forms in Europe. An overview of the relevant literature with emphasis at the postal sector¹

2.1 Definition of the Cultural Mediation

In general, Mediation is an effective instrument for conflict prevention, transformation and resolution. It is a basic feature of crisis management of inter- and intra-state conflicts. “The mediating person is an individual who serves as a link between two or more cultures and social systems. The essence of the mediating function is to shape exchanges between the participating societies so that the contact will benefit those cultures, on terms that are consistent with their respective value systems” gave Bochner a general definition of the mediator.² Within this broad conceptualization, attempts also to distinguish two types of mediating functions: the mediator as a translator whose purpose is “to represent one culture to another and accurate cross-cultural knowledge” and the cultural mediator who focuses on “reconciling disparate culture practices”. To be more specific, a cultural mediator has a synthesizer’s role, because 21st century demands “coping with unfamiliar culture and involve a degree of culture learning and behavioral adaptation as a result of which the person becomes increasingly multicultural”(Taft, 1981). Last but not least, a cultural mediator highlights the importance of diversity as an equalizer in western and immigrant societies and could include mediating activities in general, rather than specific professional profiles.³

The issue of Cultural Mediation can be related with different contexts such as business, tourism and immigration. In line with the first one, the cultural mediator aims to enhance relationships of employees and promote diversity. As far as tourism is concerned, its objective is to support the tourist encounter. Last but not least, a cultural mediator can be related also to health problems. In

¹ Prepared by:EEO Group S.A. Contact Person: EleniDamianou. edamianou@eeogroup.gr

²Bochner, S..(1981). “The Social Psychology of LanguageMediation”. SchenkmanPublishingCompany.

³Kahlenberg, Richard D..(1996).” The Remedy, Class, Race and AffirmativeAction”. NewYork: HarperCollins.

addition, Cultural Mediation is combined also with the issue of immigration, in order to reduce socioeconomic gaps and tensions between different ethnic groups and minorities.

As far as the policy framework and legal status of the cultural mediators, such as the funding, the professional profile and the eligibility, it varies across Europe. However, there are certain codes of conduct at national level, who are used by stakeholders as an important tool to ensure the quality of the mediation process:⁴

I. Competence

II. Appointment

III. Fees

(Mediators must supply the parties with complete information as far as the remuneration which they intend to apply.)

IV. Promotion of mediator's services

V. Independence

VI. Impartiality

VII. Procedure

(The mediator must ensure that the parties to the mediation clearly understand the characteristics of the mediation process.)

VIII. Fairness of the process

IX. The end of the process

(The mediator must undertake all the appropriate measures and actions to ensure that any agreement is reached by all parties and that all parties understand the terms of the agreement.)

X. Confidentiality

Moreover, 17 Member States encourage mandatory training of mediators in their national legislation. In order to further promote the training of mediators, the European

4EUROMED JUSTICE. European Code of Conduct for mediators. Available at: <https://www.euromed-justice.eu/en/document/eu-european-code-conduct-mediators>. (Last accessed on: May 21, 2019).

Commission will continue to finance various projects concerning training on mediation through its “Justice Program”.⁵

2.2 Cultural Mediators in the EU countries

The EU has been strongly in favor of promoting intercultural mediation as a means of bridging cultural barriers. The European Economic and Social Committee stated that “education should reflect the internal diversity of European societies” and that “Intercultural mediators should be available and teaching resources should be boosted in order to resolve linguistic and cultural difficulties.”⁶ Moreover, promoting intercultural mediation for migrant integration the EU has undertaken several projects. For example, the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals which was established in the framework of the EU Program “Solidarity and management of migration flows” has issued several calls for the training and employment of cultural mediators.⁷

Intercultural practices and models vary in the EU. In Belgium the need of cultural mediation is considerable, but people believe that it is well-met. Mediators who work with asylum-seekers believe that the presence of an interpreter is required by the law. On the other hand, trainers and in general mediators argue that the need is not so important.⁸ The job title “cultural mediator” is used for the health care sector and “social interpreter” and “social translator” for the social sector (including the health care sector). Intercultural mediators work at Belgian hospitals or are employees there and are funded with government assistance on the basis of legal provisions in Belgium.⁹ One good practice of intercultural mediation include the Cultural Mediation Program

5 European Commission. (2016). “Report from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the application of directive 2008/52/ec of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain aspects of mediation in civil and commercial matters.” Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A542%3AFIN>. (Last accessed on: June 1, 2019).

6 EESFC. “Immigration in the EU and integration policies: Cooperation between regional and local governments and civil society organisations”. Available at: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/immigration-eu-and-integration-policies-cooperation-between-regional-and-local-governments-and-civil-society>. (Last accessed: on May 28, 2019).

7 European Commission(). “Solidarity and Management of Migration flows(2007-2013): Success Stories from Portugal.” <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/solidarity-and-management-of-migration-flows-2007-2013-success-stories-from-portugal>. (Last accessed on: May 21, 2019).

9 EQUAL EP Trans Kom-gesund & sozial. “Comparative Study on Language and CultureMediation in different European countries”.

in Hospitals, which was implemented by Belgium from 1991 to 2015. The aim of the program was the improvement of the Belgian migration policy through proposals from the academia, in the fields of medical sociology and anthropology. As a result, 100 intercultural mediators are employed in 52 hospitals in Belgium today. EU considered it as a good practice, because of the fact that its objective was very clear and specific. Meanwhile, task description of the intercultural mediators was formulated from the start of the 1991 and updated once in 2008 and again in 2015¹⁰. In Belgium there are approximately 20 translation and interpreting services in different areas such as telephone interpreting, the interpreting on site, where the interpreter orally translates a talk between two parties at the site of the assignment and the written translation. Generally, intercultural mediation aims to eliminate inequality in health care.¹¹ A training requirement for employment as an intercultural mediator in the healthcare is either a degree in the field of intercultural mediation in the public health sector or in the social sector, such as language, literature studies or interpreting. In Flanders and Brussels there are also a three years training programs on higher secondary level.¹²

Besides this, Germany uses cultural mediators for the successful integration of migrants. To be more specific, the starting point of the initiative “MiMi –Migrants for Migrants” in Germany was the insufficient access of them to health care, because of the fact that they were disadvantaged groups in many fields, such as the language difficulties and the different model of health insurance. After the reunification of Western and Eastern Germany, the Ethno-medical center launched this program and between 2003 and 2004 a total of 75 migrants completed a training to become intercultural health mediators.¹³ The EU supports this practice, due to the fact that it combines not only basic training and language learning, but also underlines the need for migrants to broaden their expertise and improve their quality of life and so it fosters a quicker integration.

10Verrept, H. Coune, I. (2015). “Developing a guide for intercultural mediation in healthcare in Belgium”.

11Leservice de médiation interculturelle du CHR de la Citadelle à Liège. Available at: http://labiso.be/ebooks/labiso_65/html-n/labiso_65_brut.html . (Lastaccessed on: May 29, 2019)

12Verrept, H.(2007).” Sprach- und Kulturvermittlung in Belgien. Eine Antwort auf Ungleichheit in der Gesundheitsversorgung. Interdisziplinäre Reihe”.

13Cities of Migration. (2009) “MIMI-With Migrants, For Migrants: Intercultural Health in Germany.” Availableat: http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/mimi-with-migrants-for-migrants-intercultural-health-in-germany/. (Lastaccessed on: May 29, 2019).

In 2010, arise the need to develop a non-traditional approach to enhance cultural mediators' educational skills. In this context, the TIPS project (T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for Intercultural Dialogue), co-financed by the EU Leonardo da Vinci Program, and developed a blended T-learning strategy by integrating a technology platform consisting of e-learning (Internet), M-learning (PDA & Smartphones) and TV-learning (IPTV).¹⁴ In this initiative participated many EU countries (Austria, France, Poland, Greece and Italy) with main focus on maximizing the effectiveness of the cultural mediators' training. Moreover, in Western Europe France had made serious reforms about intercultural mediation process, such as the link-women, who as cultural mediators organize and accompany encounters between individuals and institutions.¹⁵ It is considered as a good practice, because has a clear mission by describing in detail the deontology and intervention frames, while it sets the working conditions and the tasks of mediators. Meanwhile, this initiative promotes women migrant empowerment, starting from the late '80s, underlining their needs to overcome intercultural barriers and communication difficulties.¹⁶



Another good practice of cultural mediation was undertaken in Switzerland, where the Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpretation and Mediation is the contact point for intercultural mediation and act as the main representative of all stakeholders in intercultural interpreting. The Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpretation and Mediation created also a learning platform which provides free access to subjects, such as migration and integration in the country, professional code of conduct and the appropriate links to official reports.¹⁷

In Eastern Europe, Romania has made improvements in intercultural mediation and offers a great set of practices in intercultural mediation, including healthcare and communication. The

¹⁴Polymeropoulou, K. , Kameas, A.(2010). "Using the TIPS platform to train Greek cultural mediators". Social Applications for Lifelong Learning. Available at: <http://daissy.eap.gr/files/TIPS/paper3-en.pdf>. (Last accessed on: June 1, 2019).

¹⁵ Madelin, B. (2007). "Lerôle des femmes-relais". Informations Sociales.

¹⁷Interpret. "Lernplatt form für das inter kulturelle Dolmetschen". Available at <https://www.inter-pret.ch/>. (Last accessed on: May 21, 2019).

official Romanian mediator job description is long, but the most important elements include the promotion of mutual trust between members of the community and medical staff and the facilitation of health insurance coverage.

The correlation between intercultural mediation and healthcare started in Romania by the Romani NGO, Romani CRISS (Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies) in the '90s. Doctors without Borders issued a report informing that Roma in Romania were refusing vaccination. Romani CRISS investigated and later discovered that physicians refused to enter Romani communities, while the Roma were definitely afraid of the effects of vaccination, due to the fact that they were isolated and not informed of the procedure¹⁸. In this framework, Romani CRISS adapted intercultural education mediation model to the health context. Another good practice was the program ROMED1-Mediation for Roma which was initiated in 2011 with the aim to train mediators around the EU. More specifically, the program had three objectives:¹⁹

1. To promote intercultural mediation and to improve the communication and cooperation between Roma and public sector.
2. To ensure the integration rights of Roma.
3. To support the work of mediators by providing tools to for planning and implementation of their activities.

From 2011 to 2016 ROMED1 trained 1,479 mediators from 500 municipalities in 22 countries. Approximately 90% of them were Roma. Furthermore, the Roma Cultural Mediation Project with leading partner the NGO Access Ireland, was an approach in 2007 to train cultural mediators from Roma Community in Romania, in order to act as a link between service providers and other members of the community. In that way, the program aims to facilitate equal and fair access of all Roma to healthcare services.²⁰ In this initiative, collaborated two government agencies: the Health Service Executive and the Vocational Education Committee of the City of Dublin. The first phase of the project was guided through inputs from Access Ireland and a variety of external trainers from public and voluntary bodies. Apart from this, the training

18 Cohen, B. (2005). "Positive obligations: Shifting the burden in order to achieve equality". Roma. Rights Quarterly. No 1. 2005: 5.

19 Council of the European Union. ROMED1-Mediation for Roma. Available at: <http://coe-romed.org/romed1>. (Last accessed on: June 3, 2019)

20 Ryan, C. (2011). "Mediating between cultures". The Irish Times.

program covered three main areas: mediation techniques, cross-cultural communication, information about the Irish health and social sector and attending relevant conferences and events.²¹

In addition, AIDRom Timisoara has trained in September 2016, for 2 days, 10 intercultural mediators from Egypt, Syria, Serbia, Russia and Moldavia. 6 of them were hired as certified social intercultural mediators with AIDRom Office.

In the south Europe, Italy and Greece also offer good practices in cultural mediation sector. In the case of Italy there are around 4.000 cultural mediators with the majority of them to be women. The Italian legislation concerning the work of the cultural mediator as “the person who works in educational contexts within social integration, with the objective to increase the measure provided for migrant’s integration, such as inclusion, interaction and exchange and not as cohabitation between divided communities”.²² The difficulty though is that every region in the country has identified a professional profile and a specific training program and progress for cultural mediators. In 2006 the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators was created by the City of Rome with the City Council Resolution no. 160 of 18 July 2005²³. One good practice of Italy is the “MediaTo” which is funded by Compagnia di San Paolo with the aim to improve the accessibility in the information for foreigners and social interpreters. The main focus of the project was the training of the cultural mediators in the Province of Turin, in order to foster the creation of a diverse community, able to use new technologies.²⁴ Apart from this, the “Mediation device: Bridge between Center and Suburb” tried to increase and improve the fruition services in the field of healthcare, education and administration, according to the basic needs of foreign citizens with a special focus on women and to address territorial intervention, which is connected

21 EQUAL. (2010). “Training Romaas Cultural Mediators”. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/IE%20-%20training%20roma%20as%20cultural%20mediators.pdf. (Last accessed on: June 3, 2019).

22 UNAR – IDOS (2014). “Immigration’s dossier 2014”. Available at : http://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/docnews/file/2014_Scheda%20breve%20Dossier.pdf. (Last accessed on: June 1, 2019)

23 Rome Municipality (2014).” Informative note of the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators of the City of Rome”. Available at: http://www.comune.roma.it/PCR/resources/cms/documents/Nota_informativa_del_10_10_2014.pdf. (Last accessed on: June 1, 2019).

24 Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers (2009). “The intercultural mediator in six European countries”. Available at: http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/archiviodocumenti/mediazioneinterculturale/Documents/Il_Mediatore_culturale_in_sei_Paesi_europei.pdf. (Last accessed on: May 30, 2019).

with the mediation device, with the aim to support the Public Sector and more specifically the Public Administration. At last, its strategy was also the optimization and the transferring of best practices of integration from Rome to suburbs. This initiative was funded by the European Commission in collaboration with the Italian Minister of Interior and was managed by CIES Onlus Centro Informazione e Educazione allo Sviluppo (IT).²⁵

The case of Greece focused on the integration of a high flow of immigrants. The definition and practice of a cultural mediator is closer to what described as community interpreting, which means that all migrants have access to public health centers. Most cultural mediators are employed in the public sector on a voluntary basis or working in NGOs. In 2004-2009 the Equal project: “Network and Monitoring structures for strengthening of economic migrants and refugees in the labor market” aimed to train fifteen cultural mediators that could provide intermediation services in seven support offices of the project in Athens, Piraeus, Patra, Thessaloniki and Volos. The training material was basically focused on the policies for the promotion of social inclusion, interculturalism, labor and insurance issues, organization structures and the strengthening of trade unions as an entity.²⁶ Furthermore, Olympic Training in cooperation with the Hellenic Open University in 2012-2013 developed an online platform which enabled third-country migrants, partners and stakeholders to search for a cultural mediator in the field they are interested in. The platform is the first registry in Greece that lists intercultural mediators who work in the country.²⁷ Interesting initiative was also the Promotion of intercultural mediation in selected Hospitals which implemented in 2014 by the NGO METAdrasi.²⁸ Besides this, the NGO took actions to be a cultural bridge between migrants and Greek authorities as a self-funded program.²⁹ The training material was focused on the

25 UNAR – IDOS (2014) “Immigration’s dossier 2014”. Available at: http://www.dossierimmigrazione.it/docnews/file/2014_Scheda%20breve%20Dossier.pdf. (Last accessed on: May 30, 2019).

26 Equal Greece Sub-programme Employability projects. Available at: <http://www.equalgreece.gr/subomasprogsdetail.asp?Prognum=2&Subcode=6&Omascode=130>. (Last accessed on: June 3, 2019).

27 European Commission. “Creating a Registry of Trained Intercultural Mediators and Networking Intercultural Mediators through an Electronic Platform”. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/creating-a-registry-of-trained-intercultural-mediators-and-networking-intercultural-mediators-through-an-electronic-platform>. (Last accessed on: June 3, 2019).

28 Giannarou, L. (2014 June 24) 110 interpreters for immigrants in 10 hospitals. Kathimerini. Available at: <http://www.kathimerini.gr/773102/article/epikairothta/ellada/110diernhneis-gia-metanastes-se-10-nosokomeia>. (Last accessed on: June 3, 2019).

29 METADRASI. <https://metadrasi.org/>. (Last accessed on: June 4, 2019).

presentations of Greek legislation and the training tips for a successful intercultural mediation process.

2.3 The CULMED Project

As mentioned, the postal sector is a very profitable market within the European Union. Also, postal services play a key role in an effective and dynamic EU Single Market and they are of crucial importance to businesses and EU citizens alike. The European Commission works on improving the quality of delivery and access to postal services, and aims to complete a well-functioning Single Market for postal services.

However, the postal sector is currently in a period of profound change. Technological developments, challenges to the traditional economic model, liberalization, new customer expectations and significant shifts in consumption patterns are all factors that are pushing Posts to re-invent themselves. Both employers and trade unions have recognized an increased requirement for flexibility and efficiency of the workforce. However, both sides have also recalled that efficiency should also be closely interlinked with quality of service and customer orientation based on the employees' know-how. Indeed, employees are an essential part of the unique selling opportunities that postal operators have and contribute to build trust in the contact with customers. The adaptation of skills and competences can be considered as an essential answer to manage the changes in and challenges for the sector.

It is also true that EU is facing a considerable migration crisis which results in a considerable increase of third country nationals and refugees living in EU member states. All member states are struggling for their integration. More effective integration of migrants can make an important contribution to the target identified by the EU 2020 Strategy to reduce by 20 million the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion. In order to constitute a genuine instrument for the integration into society in which they live, long-term residents should enjoy equality of treatment with citizens of the Member State in a wide range of economic and social matters. Additionally, as the Commission pointed out in its Communication of 7 April 2016, “national economic and social policies will need to cater for the recent inflow of immigrants and refugees”, to provide for their immediate needs and their active participation into society. Immigrants and newly-arrived refugees face problems, including cultural and language barriers and risks of stigmatization in education and other social activities that do prevent them from a more active participation in host societies. In addition, the Intercultural Institute in the city of

Timisoara started to develop a consultant mechanism among migrants, public institutions and the civil society in 2009, which was updated in 2011 as a National Network of Intercultural Mediators. In the beginning it was started with a group of intercultural mediators from five cities in Romania with the aim to facilitate communication between migrant groups and the rest of the society.³⁰

Within this context, it becomes critical to establish initiatives that increase social inclusion and improve the quality of delivery and access to postal services. To achieve that, our proposed project aims to provide a solution establishing a multicultural environment within the post offices and design a joint curricula, aiming at training post employees to deliver services within this multicultural environment.

In any sense, immigrants in a foreign country find it difficult to live with diversity, to transact and to do business with “unknown” people in unfamiliar environments. This misunderstanding usually exists within local citizens and is generated by the lack of knowledge of the “other”.

In view of this fact, Cultural Mediators as professionals will be trained to facilitate relations between local and foreign citizens and to promote reciprocal knowledge and comprehension have the ability to promote social and working inclusion aimed at favoring a positive relationship between persons of different cultural backgrounds.

Our training program is going to include soft skills and language skills and target indirectly immigrants that will learn about the post services. This results to social and professional development of our target group, embracing migrants and refugees into our societies, through social integration.

The objectives of the project are summarized below:

1. Combating discrimination and stereotypes through “people to people” provision of postal service centered on a better acknowledgment of the richness of multicultural identity in Europe;
2. Foster social inclusion by organizing an environment where immigrants will feel “welcomed” and can have access to several services

30 Intercultural Cities. “Intercultural Profile”. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168058cda9> . (Last accessed on: June 6, 2019).

3. Improve the quality of services provided to immigrants.
4. Enhance Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications related to the postal sector.

There are four main target groups that are going to be addressed:

1. Post office employees current and future.
2. Local and rural societies, where social inclusion is going to be enhanced
3. Public administration and organizations that are delivering services to migrants, since they are going to be provided cost effectively within a controlled environment.
4. Immigrants' Population.

2.4 Cultural Mediators in the Postal Sector

Postal Services play a key role for EU citizens and business, due to the fact that employs about 1.8 million people³¹. The aim of the European postal policy is to ensure the affordable, permanent and high-quality postal services throughout the continent. However, 21st century is characterized by dynamic sectoral changes in European postal companies, while they have to answer new social and environmental dilemmas. According to the Europeans' Commission project "European Pillar of Social Rights", every citizen must have equal opportunities, access to the labor market and social protection.³² In that way the postal sector must be a major mechanism of fostering social inclusion.

Furthermore, the Universal Postal Union in its report “Postal Development Report 2018” clearly demonstrates how the postal sector contributes to SDG 8 of the Agenda of 2030³³, by promoting inclusive growth and productive employment. In 2016 postal operators employed around 5.32 million staff members worldwide.

2.4.1 Greece: current situation & best practices

Greece postal sector has made a huge improve on its connection with matters such as integration,



social inclusion and solidarity for refugees. Hellenic Post (ELTA) focuses on satisfying its customers' needs, by meeting the needs of the customers, promoting innovation, developing new products and by continuously enriching its services. Hellenic Post invests heavily in developing the skills and capabilities of its personnel, due to the fact that in a rapidly changing postal environment more challenges arise. In

31 European Commission. Available at :https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/postal-services_en. (Last accessed on: May 21, 2019).

32 European Commission. (2017). “European Pillar of Social Rights”. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en. (Last accessed on: May 21, 2019).

33Boffa, M., Borba, F, and Piotrowski, L.(2018). “Postal Development Report 2018”. Universal Postal Union.

the direction of the continuing and certified improvement of the professional skills of both employees and executives the Vocational Training Centre (KEK ELTA) has a decisive contribution through the implementation of contemporary training programs. Moreover, environmental protection and contribution to the vision of sustainable development are considered corporate strategic choices. ELTA supports environmental actions and participate in international environmental programs.³⁴

One good practice of cultural mediation is considered the fact that in the 100th anniversary of the Museum of Modern Greek Culture in 2018, ELTA focused on the presentation of its cultural heritage by presenting paintings of TheofilosHatzimichalis as stamps. In that way ELTA tried to give meaningful substance to narratives that were silenced and ignored as non-importance, functioned as a cultural mediator mechanism.³⁵

Besides this, on the International Women Day in 2018, ELTA created a Commemorative set of stamps, sending a strong message in support of equal rights of women.³⁶

Another good practice as a fight against inclusion was the supporting of the refugees, in cooperation with the radio station Athina 9.84 and the newspaper Athens voice. The idea was to



undertaken the initiative to design, print and distribute information brochures for refugees. The purpose of the initiative was to provide refugees with useful information regarding medical assistance, hospitality centres and organisations able to accompany them during their stay, as well as information on the ways of transportation to the borders. The brochures, entitled ‘Are you a refugee? All you need to know’, available in English, Arabic and Persian, were distributed

34 Hellenic Post. <https://www.elta.gr/en-us/company.aspx>.

35 Hellenic Post. “COMMEMORATIVE SET OF STAMPS - FEUILLET “100-year anniversary of the Museum of Modern Greek Culture”. Available at: <https://www.elta.gr/Company/PressOffice/Pressreleases/tabid/753/newsid1179/1486/language/en-US/Default.aspx>. (Last accessed on: May 30, 2019).

36 Hellenic Post.” COMMEMORATIVE SET OF STAMPS “MARCH 8 – INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY”. Available at: <https://www.elta.gr/Company/PressOffice/Pressreleases/tabid/753/newsid1179/1421/language/en-US/Default.aspx>. (Last accessed on: June 6, 2019).

by postmen at the refugee reception centres on the islands and at post offices throughout the country.³⁷

Apart from this, in 2015 ELTA had set up a special post office displayed at the Chocolate Factory and Museum theme park, for the purpose of encouraging visitors to post a chocolate to a person in need, by creating special packages. Visitors could choose to send a chocolate from the museum whether to a refugee child hosted at the Refugee Reception Centre, a child of the charity The Smile of the Child for protection of children's rights or an elderly person hosted in Athens Nursing Home. The company undertook the free transportation of candies to the recipients. This gesture of solidarity was also a way to introduce participants to the postal world.³⁸

Another cultural practice was a specially designed space in Athens central post offices to allow new musicians to present their work, accompanied by their musical instruments and the necessary sound equipment, individually or in groups. At the same time, Hellenic Post promoted these new musicians through its corporate website and social networks. The communications campaign named 'Listen to new ELTA era - Step to new artists' made special reference to the participation of a children's musical group from Ergastiri, an association for people with disabilities. This initiative ran from the end of 2015 to the beginning of 2016.³⁹

Moreover, in 2018 ELTA undertook an initiative which in collaboration with its Cultural Center, aimed to promote "Smart Cultural" activities in order to foster solidarity for retired employees. One activity involved the Theatrical Team of ELTA's Cultural Center, in which three retired ELTA employees were enrolled as amateur actors. What is more, as a final product ten situational videos were produced in which the Theatrical Team performed actual customer service situations taking place in a real post office environment.⁴⁰

37CSR.(2016). "The Postal Sector leading the way in Corporate Responsibility".

38CSR.(2016). "The Postal Sector leading the way in Corporate Responsibility"

39CSR.(2016). "The Postal Sector leading the way in Corporate Responsibility"

40CSR.(2018). "The Postal Sector leading the way in Corporate Responsibility"

2.4.2 Romania: current analysis & best practices

Romania postal sector (PoștaRomână) is the national operator in the field of postal services and contributes greatly to solidarity and social inclusion matters. One action was the promotion of



the role of women in connection with their careers. The strategic capitalization of the relationship with women employees was not achieved through financial motivation, but on the contrary through self-motivated organizational culture of the employees themselves⁴¹. Besides this, Romanian postal sector organized a vocational training with the target group: female employees who wanted to

obtain qualification in management through grants. The working methodology was focused on the development of effective skills in planning, implementing and monitoring a project.⁴² In that context, the postal sector highlighted the need to “leave no one behind” in line with the Agenda of 2030 for sustainable development.

2.4.3 Other European Countries

As far as other European Countries are concerned, many good practices have been made in cultural mediation. The first case is was the educational take-off with “L ‘ Envol”, La Banque Postale campus with the objective is to give the opportunity to young talented students to attend tutoring classes, as well as cultural trips to French cities. The initiative was successfully, due to the fact that 350-400 students joined the program and a message of solidarity was spread out. In the case of Swiss Post, the MOSAICO network for diversity was established as an internal network that promoted linguistic and cultural diversity at the post in 2015. In order to make it

41CSR.(2017). “The Postal Sector leading the way in Corporate Responsibility”

42CSR.(2015). “The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”

easier for people to use, four events were organized in three regions (Berne, Lausanne, Bellinzona). The goal of this project was the cultivation of a culture of mutual understanding at Swiss Post and to overcome cultural barriers.⁴³ Deutsche Post contributed also in 2016-2017 to the refugee aid, giving special focus on their language acquisition and vocational preparation and training⁴⁴. In 2018 the concept of the integration of refugees was developed further with the initiative “Mentoring4Integration”. The goal of the project was to assist refugees to enter working world by having as mentors the Deutsche Post employees. The project operated in Bonn region and focused on students in international classes who lacked German language and soft skills and were 16 to 21 years old. The activities of the project were regular meetings of the trainer with the mediator, which included the preparation for an interview and the sharing of their own experience.⁴⁵ Moreover Austria, promoted well-being at work with setting up a welfare association “post sozial” with diverse social services and activities. The association operates from 2005 and its services included not only financial support to employees faced unusually high costs, as a result of illness or natural disasters along with discounted tickets for cultural and sport events. Overall, more than 50,000 people took advantage of the social benefits of this organization.⁴⁶

Bulgarian Posts PLC took an internship initiative for university students which was managed and financed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria, in the frame of creating new job opportunities to reach young people and teach them the postal sector role. This project functioned as a link between the academia and business, supporting students to gain not only practical experience but to get in touch with the labor market integration and culture⁴⁷. In the south Europe, Poste Italiane has asked in 2018 22 street artists to paint exterior walls of post offices in deprived areas. The “P.A.I.N.T” initiative aimed to transform post offices into more comfortable and pleasant places, in order to foster positive reactions of post office’s employees and customers.⁴⁸

43 CSR.(2015). “The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”

44 CSR.(2017). ““The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”

45 CSR.(2018). ““The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”

46 CSR.(2017). “The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”.

47 CSR.(2018). “The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”.

48 CSR.(2018). “The Postal Sector leading the way to Corporate Responsibility”.

2.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, it is true that at these times of new challenges, such as the increase of migration flows, globalization and technology, a cultural mediator has a key role, acting as a facilitator of relationships between diversity groups.

The demographic challenges affect societies both structurally and culturally, by threatening social cohesion and national identity. In this case the role of cultural mediator is not only to act as a bridge, but also to address the needs of the target groups. In that way, he must prove that his skills are adequate enough in order to function as an efficient mechanism of fostering social inclusion. He should acquire knowledge of his own and of other's behaviors and interpreting the related information based on existing knowledge and attitudes.

In this context, Postal Sector should act as a cultural mediator with the aim to disseminate not only knowledge, but also to promote the values of solidarity and acceptance of the diversity groups.

A major lesson is how little do we know about the depth of the skills a cultural mediator has to acquire. We suggest lines for future research in four categories:

1. More good practices of cultural mediation throughout the continent of the EU.
2. More cultural mediation initiatives from stakeholders, in order to foster inclusive growth.
3. More selected cultural topics for investigation and research.

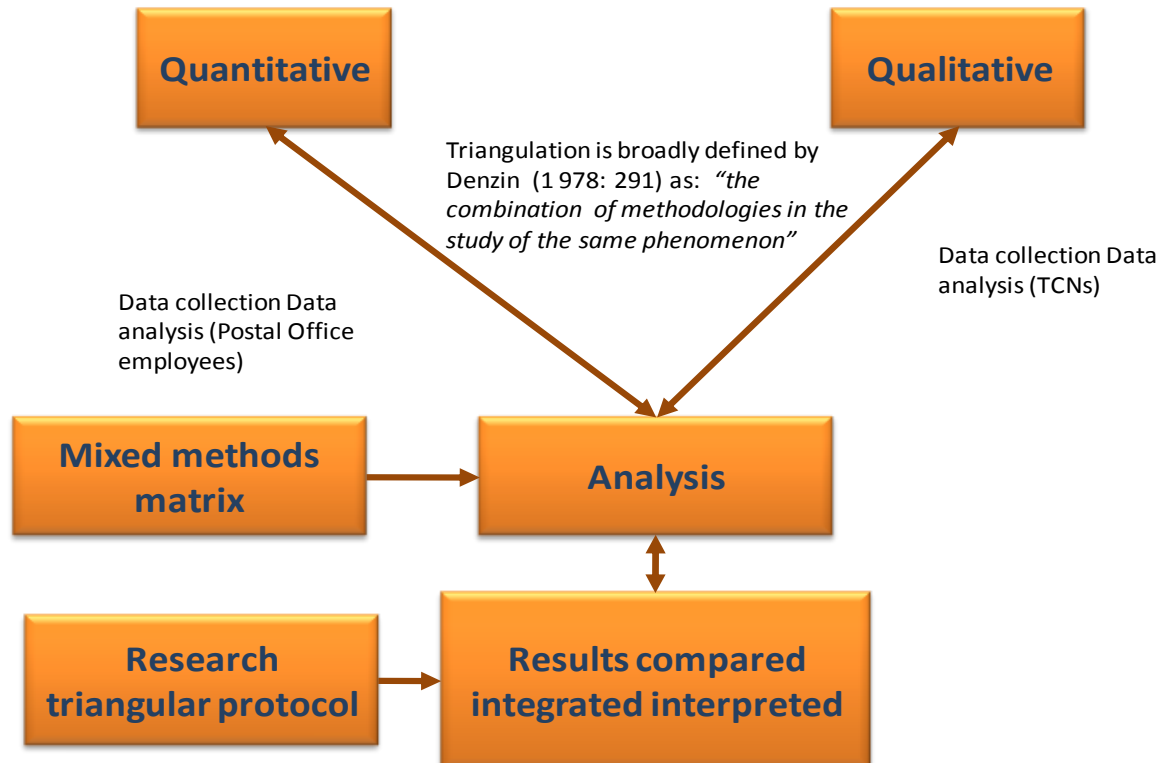
Assessing the impact of the cultural mediator is crucial to sustainability and policy analysis of the current situation.

3. CULMED Methodology

Within the framework of the CULMED research program, a field study was conducted to investigate the postal sector employees when serving TCNs. The multiple purpose of the research was to promote social inclusion for immigrants and third country nationals, combat discrimination and negative stereotypes, enhance transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications related to the postal sector, facilitate access and knowledge of third country nationals to the postal services and to raise awareness.

For this purpose, a mixed methods design was employed. Both the quantitative and qualitative part was running simultaneously (see figure below). For the quantitative part of the study, a survey was designed especially for the purposes of the project which was administered to postal sector employees in the local area of Athens (Attica, Greece) and Bucharest (Romania).

Scheme 3-1 Culmed Methodology: Mixed methods triangulation strategy



For the purposes of the qualitative study, besides focus group interviews also semi-structured in depth interviews were conducted with 10 participants who met certain eligibility criteria i.e. they were immigrants (TCNs) and were visiting a local postal office.

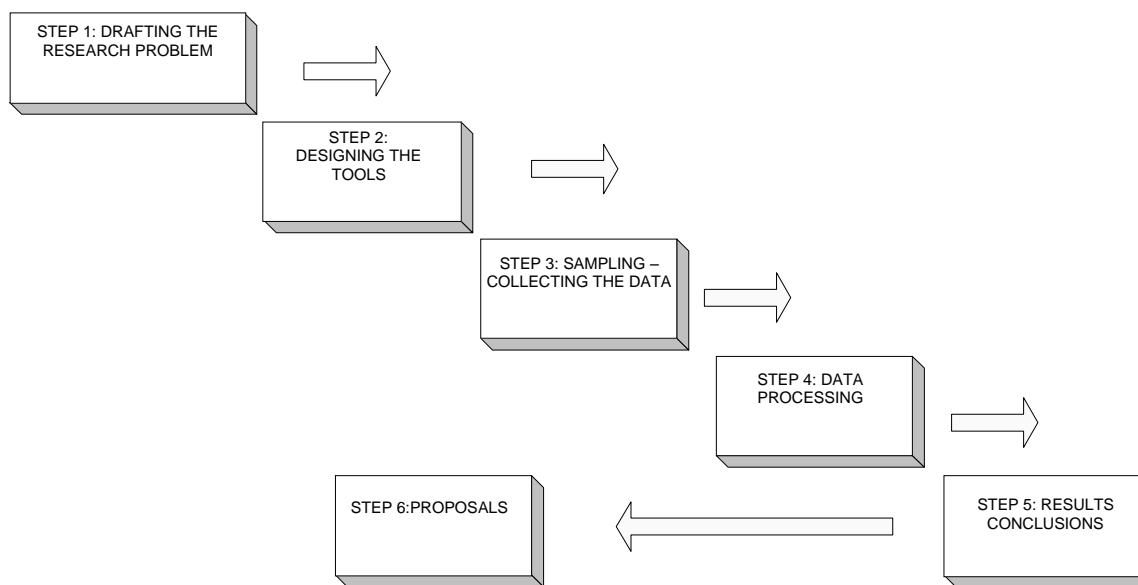
In the rest of the current chapter, we describe the methodology for the quantitative part of the study and present the results from the field work. It follows with the methodology and the analysis for the quantitative part of the study.

3.1 Quantitative Research methodology

3.1.1 Research design

The research problem and individual research objectives form the framework in which the research is developed, whose main objective is the investigation of the educational needs of the *Postal sector's* staff personnel. Based on the methodology design, the research was carried out according to the following steps:

Scheme 3-2 The steps of research



The above steps compose the research methodology, an organized set of procedures, techniques, tools, and documentation that guide the research team in the field of lifelong learning and ongoing vocational training. Following the analysis of the results and the synthesis of the conclusions, the research is completed by formulating and processing proposals which are the subject of next reports. The stages of the investigation as carried out during its implementation are described below.

3.1.2 Research objectives and problems

The establishment of the knowledge society already from the last decades of the 20th century highlights the importance of human resources as the main productive factor of a modern economy, and it calls for the revision of the investment towards human capital. The development of human resources is now based on establishing an Economy and Management of knowledge, the main feature of which is lifelong learning and ongoing training. The constant renewal of knowledge, the continual improvement of the skills and competencies of human resources seem to be the sufficient and necessary condition for human development. The focal point of this human development is the formation of conditions and terms of socio-economic and socio-cultural development in all dimensions of the modern individual's quality of life.

These developments in the organization of modern society do not leave the field of labor unaffected, which, in combination with information and communication technologies, requires the reform of all standards and qualifications in the professional life of man. Matters of restructuring the organization of labor through technological developments require constant adaptation of workers to new requirements and challenges each time towards the continuous improvement of the quality of labor produced.

3.1.3 Determining the research questions

Not only does the services sector with a focus on the postal sector not remain unaffected by developments, but the upgrading of human resources and the improvement of the services' provided quality are considered the most urgent need. The specificity of its fundamental

elements, the postal services, considered as social goods, gives to this imperative need a characteristic of direct priority.

In this context questions arise to which answers are sought:

- a) What is the state of the human resources of the Postal Sector in terms of renewing knowledge and improving their skills and competencies?
- b) What is the relationship of those determinants that affect the ongoing training of human resources?
- c) Are educational needs associated with upgrading the skills of human resources?
- d) Are the training needs of human resources linked to the upgrading and provision of services to new population groups such as the TCNs?

In the question about situation identification (question a), the variable is the renewal of knowledge and the improvement of skills while the staff of postal services is the reference population.

In the factor correlation question (b question), one variable is ongoing training, and the other is the factors that are linked between them, they influence and shape the level of human resources' vocational training.

In the questions of correlation and status configuration (questions c and d) the explanatory variable is the educational needs with a positive hypothetical direction, the result is the improvement of skills and competencies of human resources, the quality of services provided and their targeting to new population groups such as TCNs.

3.1.4 Formulating the research hypothesis

These questions refer to the important issues of lifelong learning, adult education and the continuous improvement of Postal services' quality. According to the findings of the literature review, employees who attend training programs are expected to have renewed knowledge, skills improvement and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of services. Drafting the research hypothesis can, therefore, be as follows:

The ongoing training of human resources in the Postal sector contributes positively to upgrading labor skills and the improvement of the provided services targeted to TCNs.

It follows from the wording of the research hypothesis that the research population group is employees in the postal sector and the expected result is the upgrade of personnel and services. The independent variable is the ongoing training, the dependent variable is the improvement of the quality of human resources and services, while the hypothesis is characterized as defining the direction of the relationship between the variables.

3.1.5 Determining the research objectives

The identification of the research problem based on the research questions and the formulation of the research hypothesis forms the framework which sets out the research objectives of the study. These objectives are defined as follows:

- a. Record the demographic, educational, scientific and labor data of the postal sector's human resources
- b. Examine the factors related to the improvement of the human resources' working skills and the upgrade of services
- c. Identification and assessment of the workers' training needs in the sector about the provision of services to TCNs
- d. Formulation of educational policy proposals in the context of lifelong learning and ongoing training of staff in the Postal services.

3.1.6 Data collection tools

One single tool was designed to collect the data: **Structured questionnaire with closed-ended (mainly) and open-ended questions**

This type of tool concerns a structured questionnaire with specially designed questions and was used in the quantitative survey to investigate the employees' opinion in postal services.⁴⁹ The design of this questionnaire provided the following features:

- A. The employee answering the questions.
- B. To reduce as much as possible the risk of non-response, by using a relatively small-size (31 questions) questionnaire, attractive for completion.
- C. To be feasible to complete the questionnaire at the employee's workplace in a short time
- D. To ensure that the completed questionnaires can be checked, while at the same time ensuring the complete anonymity of the survey.

A pilot data collection test was carried out on a representative number of staff before the final formulation of the questionnaire. After the implementation of the pilot phase, the final forms of the questionnaires were presented in detail and concern:

Structured questionnaires with closed-ended and opened-ended questions and a size of X pages.

The control measures to ensure the validity of the study are as follows:

- 1) The questionnaires for the personnel of the Hellenic Post /Romanian Post.
- 2) Each questionnaire has a unique serial number. By making use of this code it is possible in immediate time to:

⁴⁹ See the Appendix for the questionnaire used in the field work.

- Cross-check the questionnaire's source of origin
- Reexamine the questionnaire even after the data entry into the database
- Compare it with other questionnaires from the same source

3.1.7 Sampling design and procedure

The study's general population concerns the human resources employed in the provision of postal services.

The method of selecting the respondents is a combination of targeted and random sampling to employees mainly in Attica (Bucharest) where the largest number of TCNs is concentrated. The following steps were followed:

Step 1: Selection of postal services in Attica (Bucharest) where employees serve TCNs daily. Cooperation with Hellenic (Romanian) Post staff who have firsthand knowledge was considered necessary. The targeted posts were in total around the central square of the capital cities:

Step 2: Random selection of the personnel of the operational bodies selected during the second sampling phase. The sampling of workers was based on the procedure of random selection by category of staff (those who usually work at the front desk). For the distribution and collection of questionnaires, there was appointed by the Hellenic Post (Romanian) staff, a research coordination group, with experience and which was also informed and trained on the research process. The sampling procedure as carried out with the support of the operational bodies' officers was as follows:

1. The data of the participants in the investigation are covered by complete anonymity
2. Access to the personnel list shall be ensured by the Hellenic Post Coordination Group
3. Individuals involved in the provision of TCN services are selected to respond to the questionnaires (e.g. Postal window employee).

3.1.8 Data collection, controlling – checking for quality and processing

The data collection was carried out according to the tools used.

Structured questionnaire with open-ended or closed-ended questions

According to the original design, the distributed questionnaires were 200 per participant country. They were collected anonymously in a specific box placed by the research officer and after a reasonable period (15-20 days), the research material was forwarded to EKKE.

3.1.8.1 Checking for quality and processing of data

During the data entry, qualitative checks were carried out at the same time. The steps taken to evaluate the inputted data in the single database are as follows:

Step 1: Random sampling of questionnaires, reading and examining all data in the database by the research officer.

Step 2: Statistical processing and analysis of data. Following the collection of the data and their entry into the database, a statistical check on the homogeneity of the data was carried out. In this case, the researchers proceeded with this process as well as with descriptive statistics tests in order to verify the accuracy of the data.

3.1.8.2 Results-conclusions -proposals

The data of the survey subjects was prepared for analysis using the SPSS statistical. The analysis is basically descriptive and comparative by applying methods of analysis of statistical significance in order to examine statistical hypotheses. The research is completed by drawing conclusions and processing the relevant proposals.

3.1.8.3 Difficulties and constrains of the field work

The main difficulties related to the collection of the data concerned the following:

1. Non-response of some Post staff due to the heavy workload.
2. Relatively low interest (in some cases) of employees to participate in the research.

3.2 Qualitative Research methodology

Taking into account the objectives of conducting the qualitative research of this program, we set up a joint (for all interviews) indicative list of questions and queries, which served as a guide to the interviews. The list of questions-questions focused on the following priority axes / areas:

1. Socio-demographic characteristics
2. Use of the Hellenic and Romania Post's products and services by immigrants
3. Behavior of immigrants
4. Information about the services of Hellenic and Romania Post
5. Proposals for new policies towards a better servicing of immigrant customers.

In this way, we perceived the clearest possible understanding of the views of the employees, immigrants and prospective employees in the Hellenic / Romanian Post regarding the evaluation and the determination of the extent to which the existing structures have worked positively towards the integration of the immigrants and to make the necessary proposals for improving the efficiency of the postal agencies in the field of immigrants' integration.

For the in-depth interviews with employees of the Hellenic Post, seven employees were interviewed, all working or having worked in branches of the Hellenic Post in central Athens as well as in the suburbs. They were all women and their experience in Hellenic Post varies from 6 months to 35 years.⁵⁰

Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with immigrants, customers of the Hellenic Post. Eight of them were men and two were women. They were all but one Third Country Nationals. Some of the interviews were conducted in the Greek language, but most were conducted in the English language, either through a translator or with the immigrant directly.

Three in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of institutions promoting the integration of immigrants and particularly Third Country Nationals in the Greek society; one with a representative from the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy, one with a representative

⁵⁰ The procedure concerning the Romanian Post follow just after the presentation of results for Greece.

from the Council for Migrant Integration and one with a representative from medical offices treating Third Country Nationals.

Three focus groups were conducted with employees of the Hellenic Post. In the first focus group, seven women were interviewed, mostly working in directive positions within the Hellenic Post. In the second focus group, ten women were interviewed, working as frontline officers and in directive positions in the suburbs of Athens. In the third focus group, five women were interviewed, working as frontline officers in downtown or central Athens branches.

Finally, one focus group was conducted with seven prospective employees of the Hellenic Post. Four of them were men and three women, either unemployed or just about to obtain their higher education degrees.

All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed, to facilitate their thematic analysis.

During the analysis of the focus groups and the in-depth interviews, the list of topics and queries and the transcripts were used. Based on the priority themes/areas as outlined in the questionnaire list, which served as a guide to the discussion, the following were investigated:

1. Profile of the immigrant customers
2. Differences between immigrant customers and native Greek customers in their profile and the use of postal services.
3. Issues regarding the servicing of immigrant customers.
4. Needs of immigrant customers.
5. Existing policies for the servicing of immigrant customers.
6. Proposals for new policies towards a better servicing of immigrant customers.

The material of the qualitative research was analyzed by each interview and collectively, with a thematic analysis approach, with the aim of making proposals on the structures and integration services they provide. The analysis and proposals focus on the provision of specialized training to postal workers in order to be able to provide quality services in the new multicultural social environment and therefore promote the social integration of migrants and third-country nationals through their interaction with officials, postal agencies and postal services in Greece.⁵¹

⁵¹See the Appendix for the questionnaires protocols and additional information concerning the qualitative research field work.

3.3 Quantitative research results

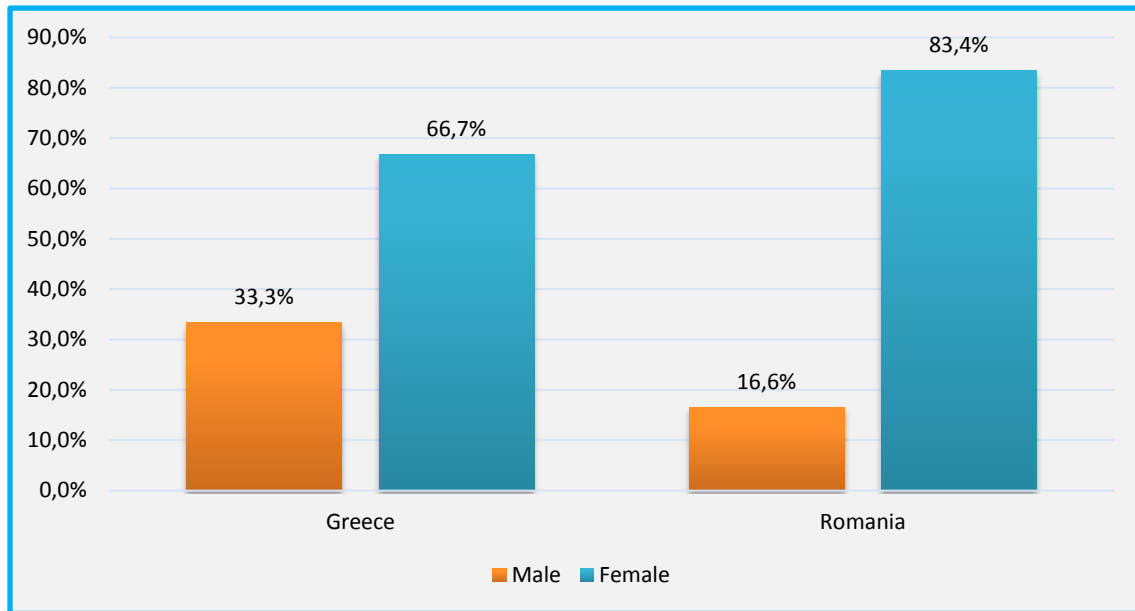
As the same questionnaire was used for the field quantitative research aiming at the employees of the Post sector ins both in Greece and Romania, it was deemed more interesting to analyze both results in comparison.⁵²

Firstly, we will discuss the demographics of the postal employees that participated in the study in both countries. Then, we will discuss how the postal employees view the servicing of customers that are Third Country Nationals and what problems do they encounter. Lastly, we will refer to the suggestions that the postal employees make for the improvement of services and process towards Third Country Nationals customers.

⁵² A total of 400 questionnaires were finally collected from post offices in Athens and Bucharest. The research showed that mainly in Greece a larger number of TCNs visit daily post offices as customers. The composition of immigrant's in Romania is totally different and concern not so much TCNs. For this reason in the appendix we presents a more detailed analysis for Greece.

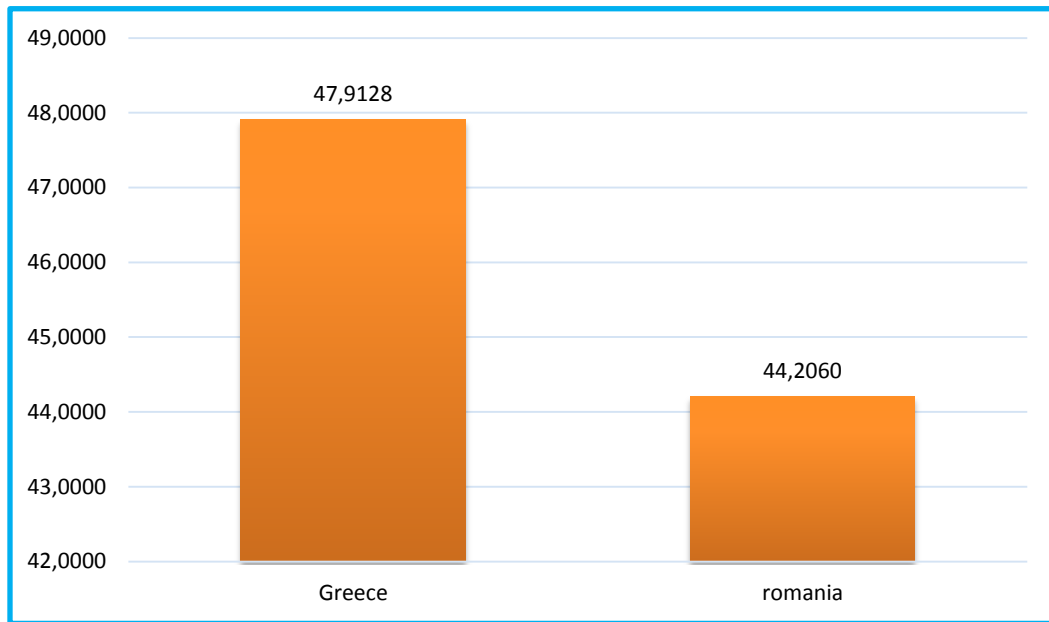
3.3.1 Participants' Demographics

Figure 3-1 Participants' Sex

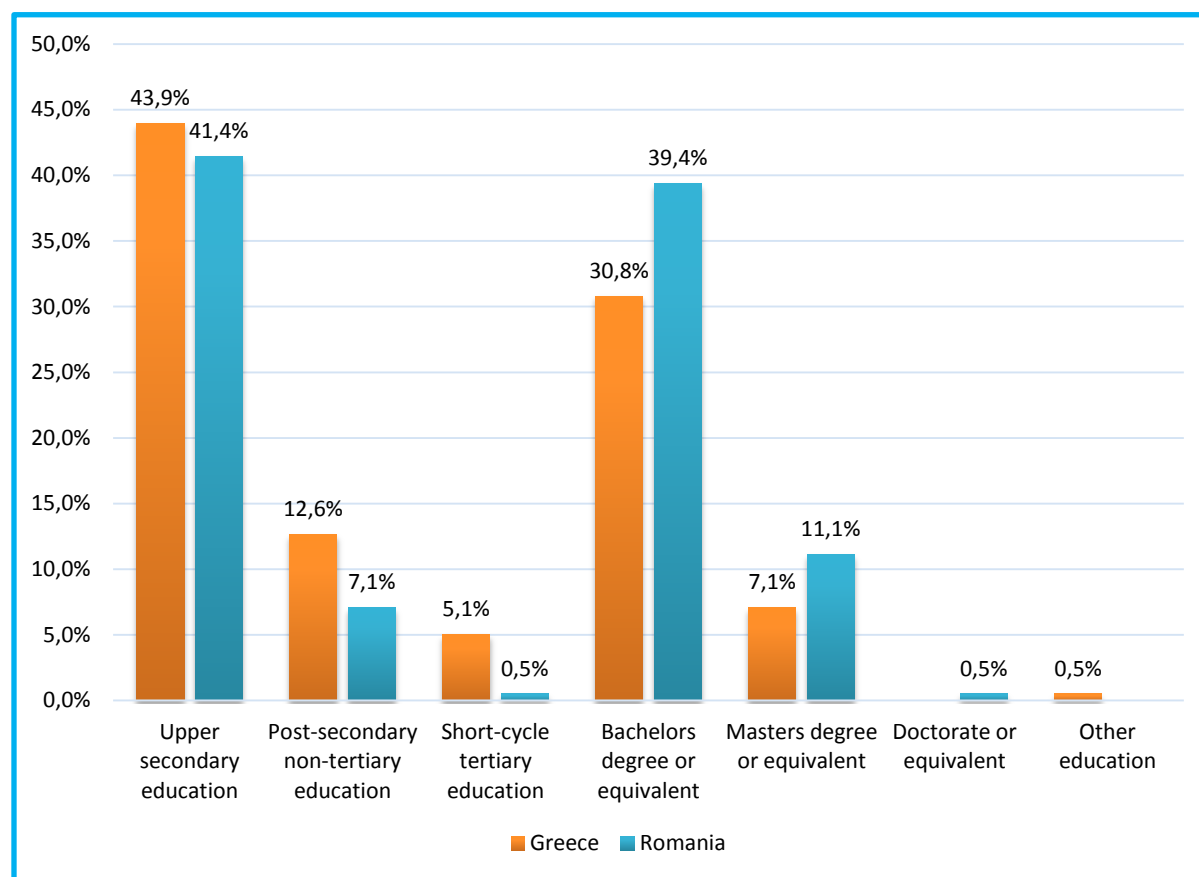


In both Greece and Romania women were overrepresented, which is indicative of the both countries' posts personnel's demographics. More specifically, in Greece women were 66.7% of the sample and men were 33.3%. In Romania, women were 83.4% of the sample and men 16.6%.

Figure 3-2 Participants' Age



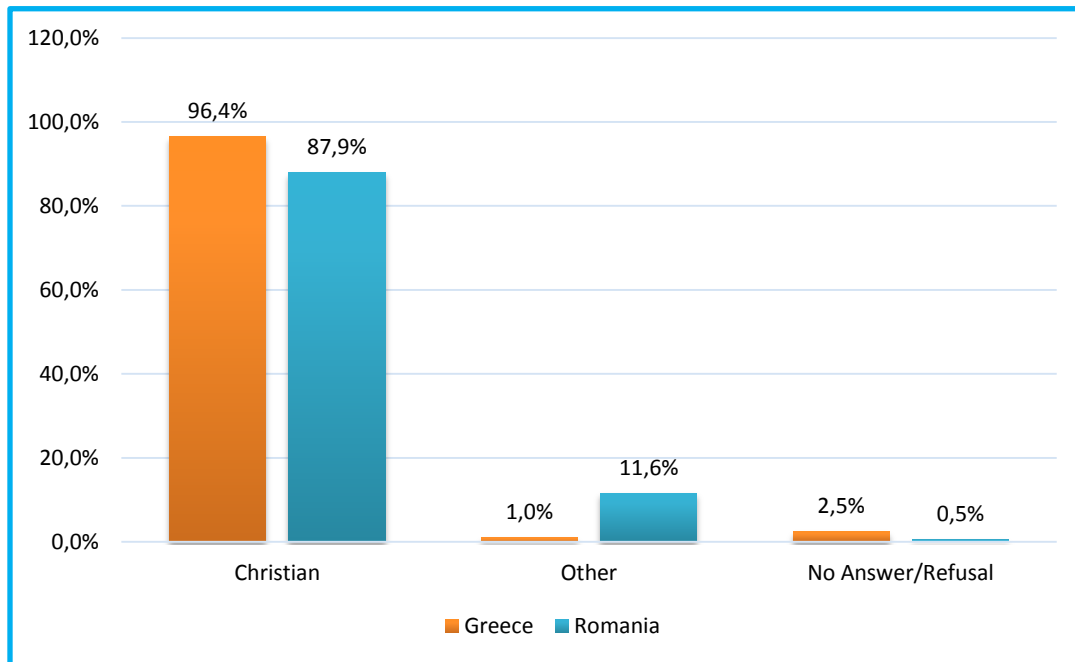
Moving on to the mean age of the participants in the study, it is only slightly differentiated, with Greek postal employees that responded in the study being of a mean age of 47.91 years and Romania 44.20 years, which points to definitely more aged personnel in the Greek posts than in the Romanian ones.

Figure 3-3 Participants' Education

When it comes to education, it seems that the two countries are pretty similar in the educational background mix of their employees. For example, in both cases the most employees that answered the questionnaires have an upper secondary education, with 41.4% in Romania and 43.9% in Greece. The Bachelors' degree or equivalent takes the second place, with 39.4% in Romania and 30.8% in Greece.

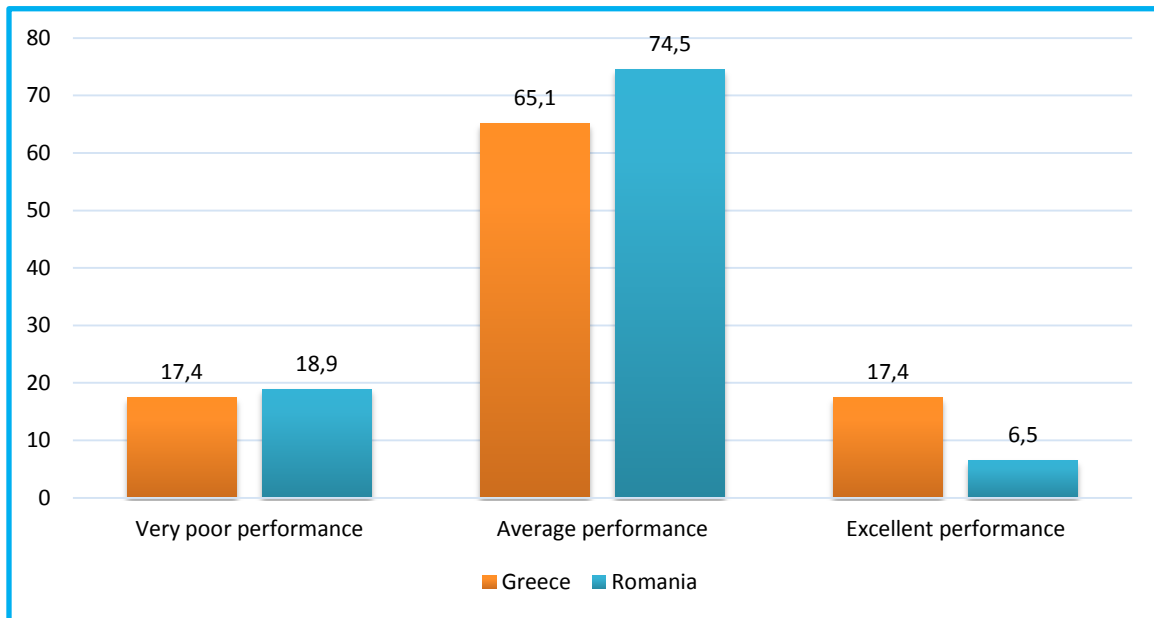
Where a difference emerges, it is in the third and fourth place; whereas in Romania the Masters' degree or equivalent comes third, with 11.1% and the Post-secondary non-tertiary education fourth, with 7.1% in Greece. Post-secondary non-tertiary education is third, with 12.6% and Masters' degree or equivalent fourth, with 7.1%.

The short-cycle tertiary education takes the fifth place in Greece, with 5.1%. In Romania, though, the fifth place is divided among short-cycle tertiary education and other education, with 0.5% of the employees for both. Lastly, in Greece 0.5% have a doctorate degree or equivalent.

Figure 3-4 Participants' Religion

Regarding the religion of the postal employees, it seems that in Greece Christianity is the most common religion, with no real alternative, as 96.4% of the employees are Christians, with other religions being only 1% and refusal answer 2.5%.

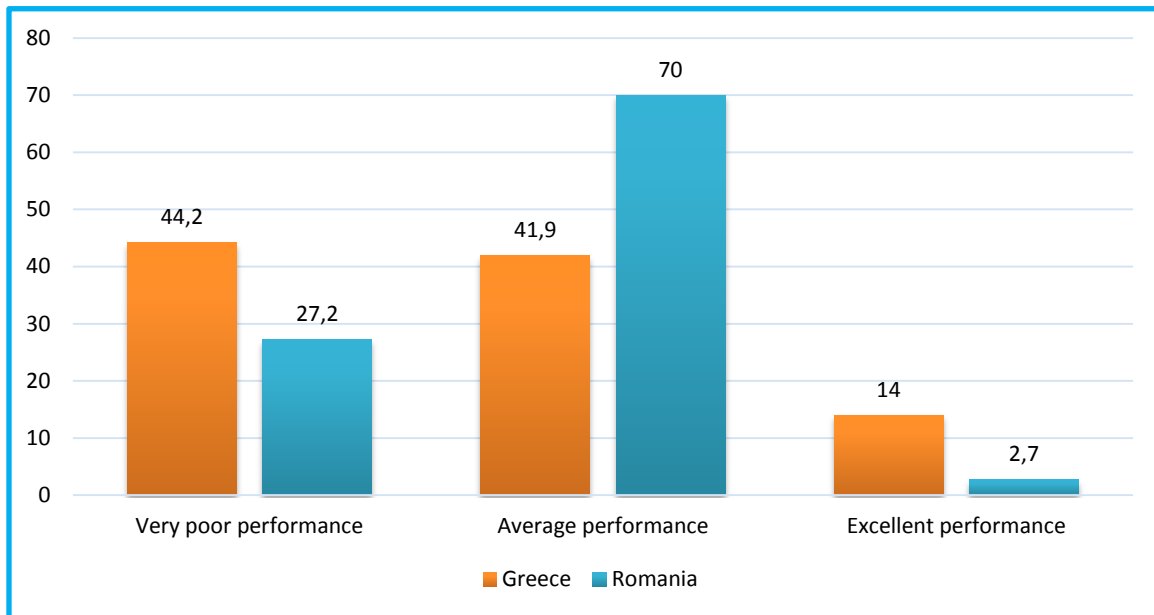
On the contrary, in Romania, though Christianity is certainly the most common religion, as 87.9% are Christians, there is also a 11.6% of employees who believe in other religions. Refusal to answer is only 0.5%.

Figure 3-5 Foreign language speaking – English

It seemed critical to have the employees of the Greek and Romanian posts self-evaluate their ability to speak the English language. Most employees in both Romania and Greece feel they perform averagely in speaking the English language, with Romanians being slightly more (74.5%) than Greeks (65.1%).

Almost the same percentage of employees in both countries feels that their performance in English is very poor, with a slightly higher percentage in Romania, of 18.9%, than in Greece, with 17.4%.

Finally, the excellent performance in the English language takes the third place for both postal services, though in Greece the percentage of employees performing excellent is significantly higher, with 17.4%, than in Romania, where only a 6.5% feels that they perform excellent.

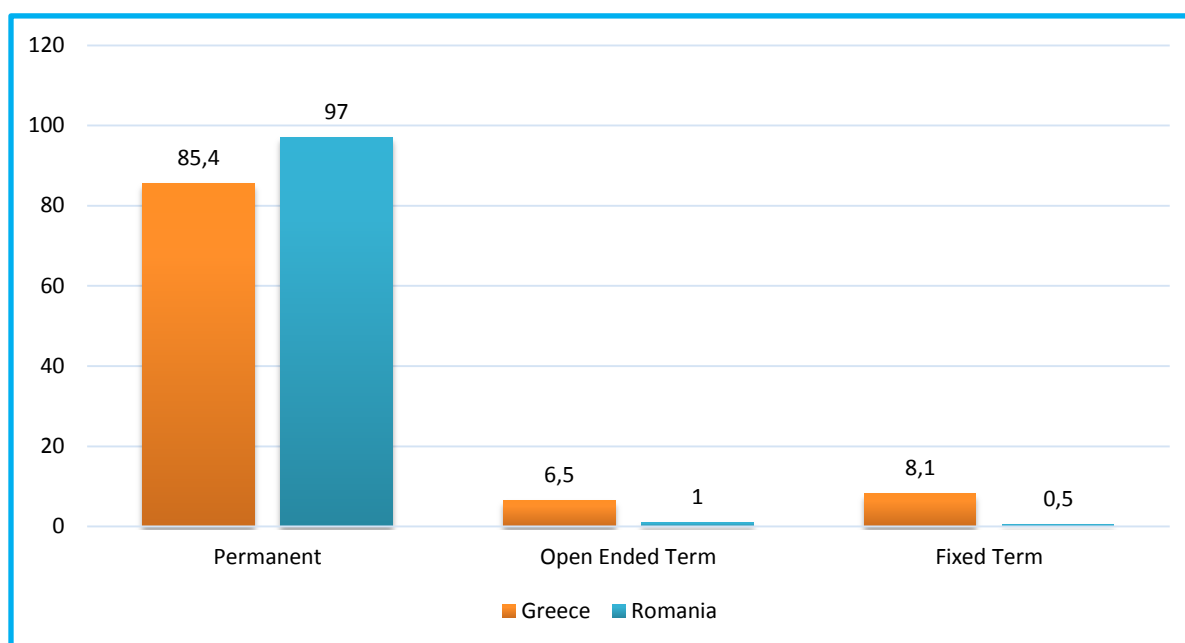
Figure 3-6 Foreign language speaking – French

As French is considered the postal language and is also a language a lot of immigrants, especially from African countries, speak, it was thought useful to assess the employee's performance in French as well.

In French, results are very different among the two countries. In Greece, nearly one half of the employees feels they have very poor performance and the other half average, with very poor performance having a definitely higher percentage (44.2%) than average performance (41.9%), though.

In Romania, on the other hand, the first and second place have a great difference and it is also the other way around; average performance is first, with a 70% of employees believing they perform averagely in French and only 27.2 % believing they perform very poorly.

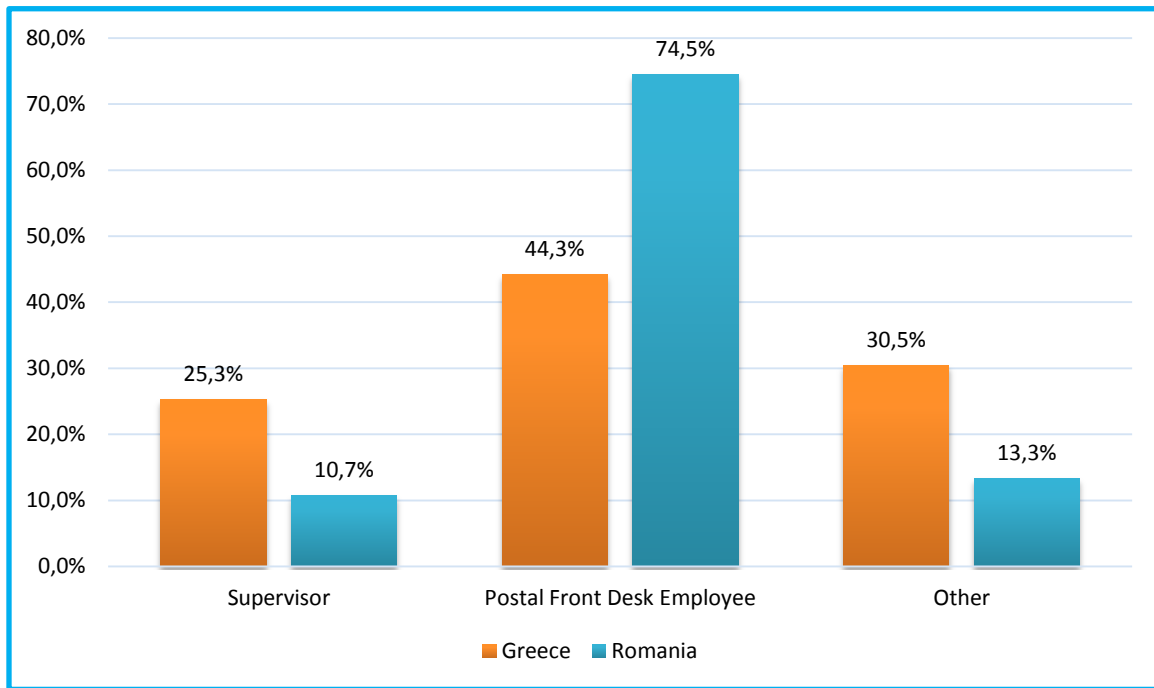
In both countries excellent performance is in the third place. However, in Greece a significantly larger proportion of postal employees think they use the French excellently (14%) than in Romania (2.7%).

Figure 3-7 Type of contract in the postal sector

The majority of the employees in the posts of Romania and Greece work as permanent personnel. Specifically, in Greece 85.4% works permanently and in Romania 97%. In Romania, only 1% works with an open-ended term and an even lower (0.5%) with a fixed term. On the contrary, in Greece there are more employees with open-ended term (6.5%) and fixed term (8.1%) than in Romania.

Years of experience in customer service	
Greece	17,7
Romania	18,3

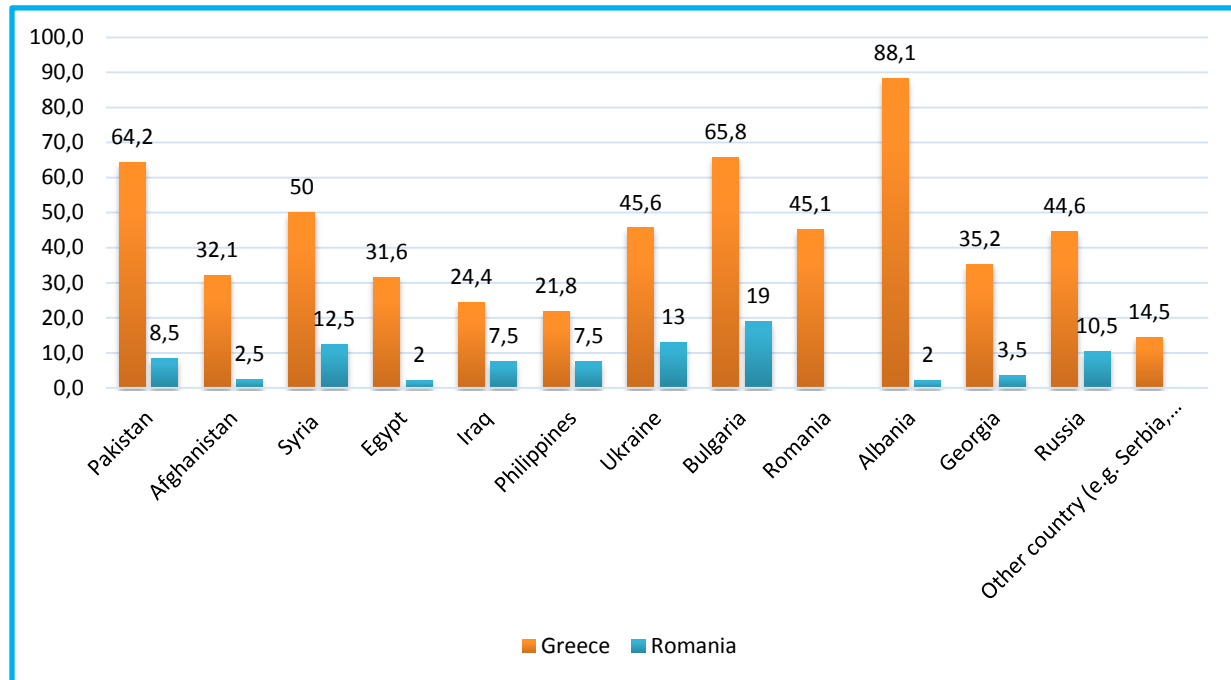
In the above table, we can see that the average years of experience of the postal officers in customer service are pretty high in both countries, with 18,3 years for Romanian postal officers and 17,7 for Greeks.

Figure 3-8 Employment position

When it comes to the position of the employees that participated in the quantitative study, the highest percentage were postal front desk employees, with 74.5% in Romania and 44.3% in Greece. In Romania only a 10.7% were supervisors and a 13.3% other kind of employees, were in Greece a significant 30.5% were other kind of employees, and an equally important 25.3% supervisors.

3.3.2 Servicing Third Country Nationals Customers, according to the postal employees

Figure 3-9 Countries of origin of Immigrant Customers



Employees in both countries were asked to answer which ethnicities are asking the services of their postal offices. The answer was in the form of yes or no for each ethnicity. In all cases, the positive answers were significantly higher in Greece than in Romania and it seems therefore that Greece has more Third Country Nationals customers.

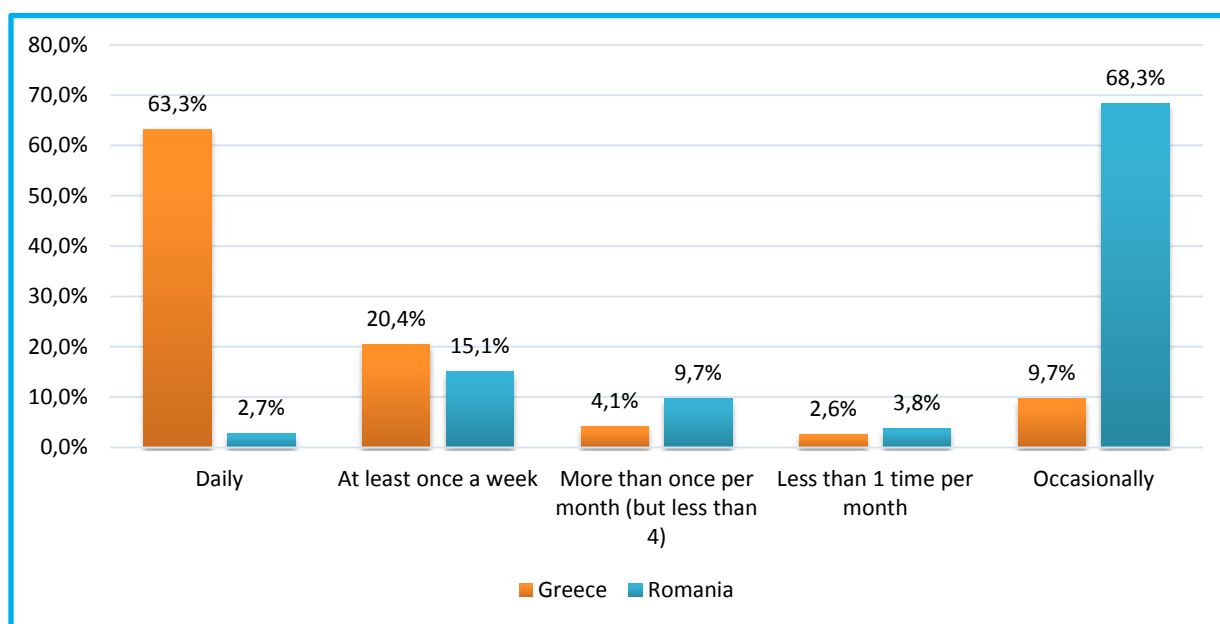
More specifically, in Greece three ethnicities receive a percentage much higher than 50%; Albania, being by far the first, with 88.1%; secondly Pakistan with 64.2% and thirdly Bulgaria, with 65.8%. 50% of the Greek postal employees believe their immigrant customers are Syrian, 45.6% Ukrainian, 45.1% Romanian, 44.6% Russian and 35.2% Georgian.

Then, 32.1% believe they are from Afghanistan and 31.6% from Egypt, 24.4% from Iraq and 21.8% from Philippines, while a 14.5% believe they are from other countries, such as Serbia.

Now, in Romania, the most common ethnicity is Bulgarian, with 19%. The second choice that had the most positive answers was other ethnicity, such as Serbia, etc., with 14.5% and then Ukraine, with 13%, followed by Syria (12.5%) and Russia (10.5%).

Then came Pakistan with 8.5%, while Iraq and Philippines have both 7.5% positive responses. The rest of the ethnicities had really low positive responses, with 3.5% for Georgia, 2.5% for Afghanistan and 2% for Egypt and Albania. Romania of course was not included in this questionnaire when distributed to Romanian postal employees.

Figure 3-10 Frequency of servicing

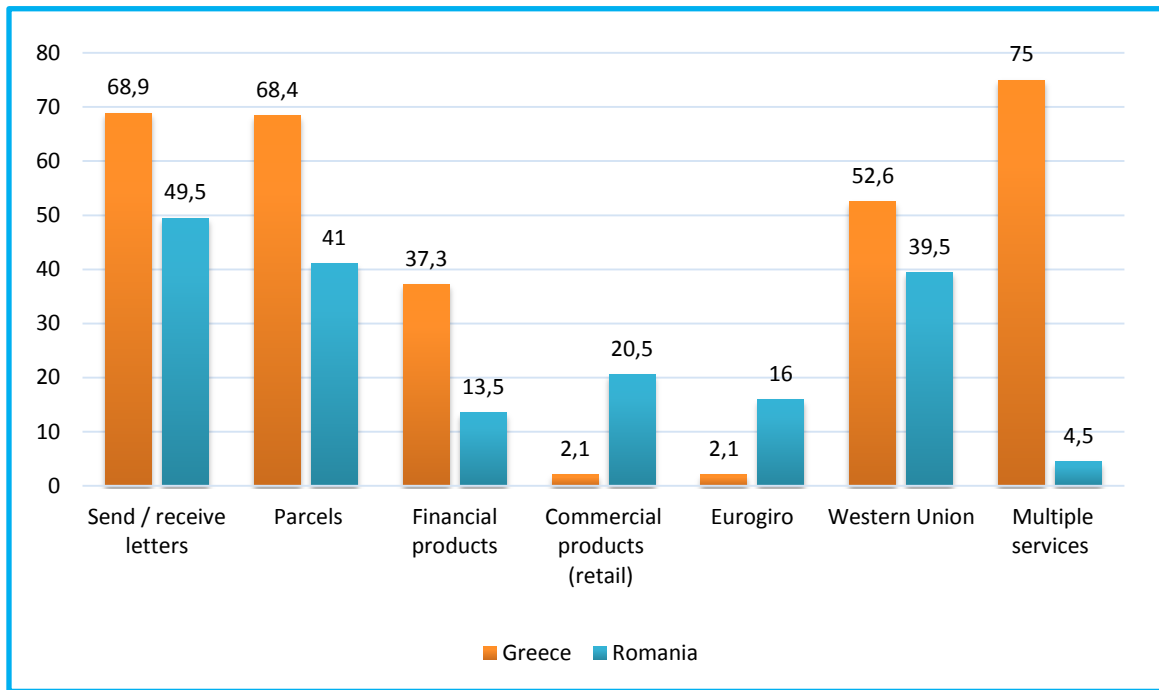


Postal employees were also asked how often do they service customers who are Third Country Nationals. Here the responses were very different. While the first answer for Greek employees, was that they service Third Country Nationals daily, with 63.3% giving this answer, only 2.7% of the Romanian employees gave the same answer.

On the contrary, the first answer for Romanian was that they service Third Country Nationals occasionally, with 68.3% giving this answer, for Greek employees this was their third answer, with 9.7%.

In both countries “at least once a week” received considerable amount of answers, with 20.4% for Greece and 15.1% for Romania. “More than once per month (but less than 4)” received 9.7% in Romania and 4.1% in Greece, while “Less than 1 time per month” received pretty low scores in both countries, with 3.8% in Romania and 2.6% in Greece.

Figure 3-11 Products and services of the Hellenic Post that immigrants mostly use

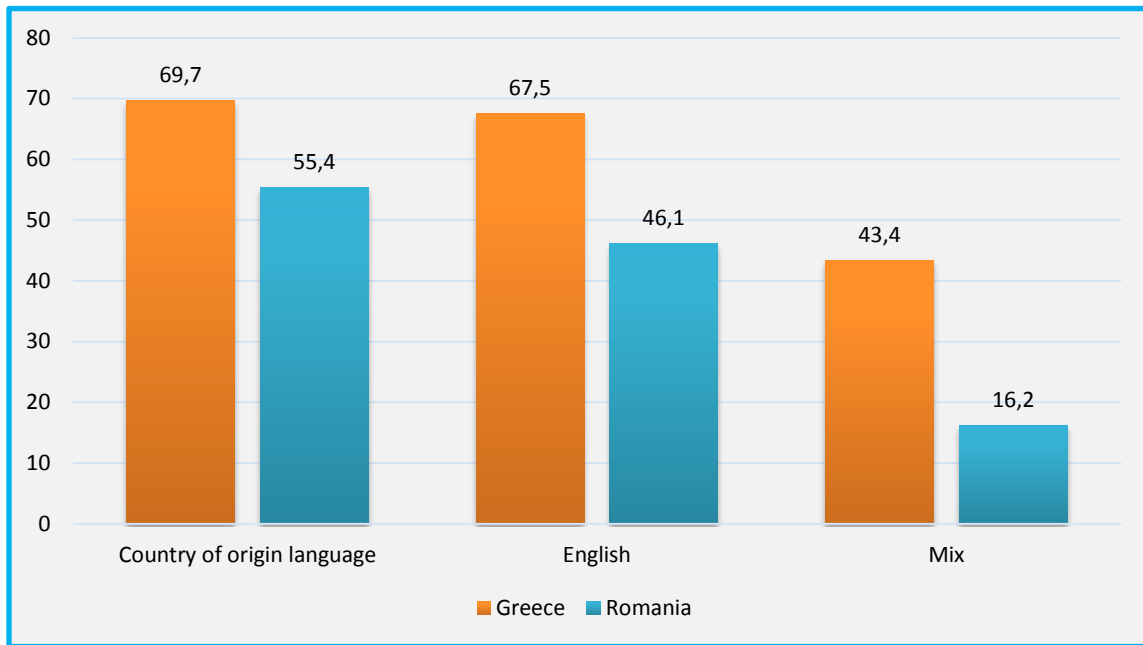


Participants were also asked about the usual transactions Third Country Nationals ask for. The question was also in the form of yes/no for each answer.

So, sending and receiving letters has a significantly higher percentage in Greece than in Romania, with a 68.9% for the first and 49.5% for the last. The same goes for parcels, with 68.4% for Greece and 41% for Romania, as well as financial products, with 37.3% for Greece and 13.5% for Romania or the Western Union services, with 52.6% for Greece and 39.5% for Romania. Where the biggest difference lies, however, is in multiple services, with 75% of Greek employees giving a positive answer and only 4.5% of Romanian employees doing the same.

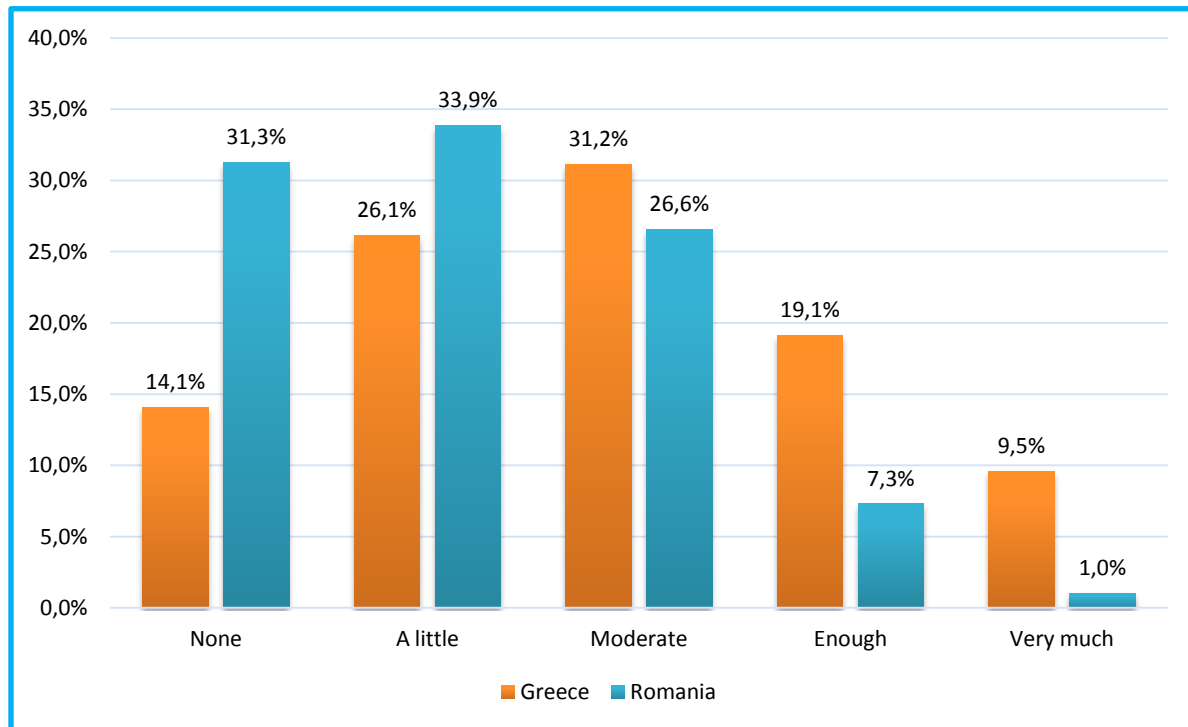
On the contrary, in commercial products or retail, it is Romania that has the highest percentage, with 20.5% and Greece having only a 2.1%. The same goes for Eurogiro, with for 16% Romania and 2.1% for Greece.

Figure 3-12 Language the transaction is concluded



When it comes to the language with which the transaction is taking place, in both countries the most frequent case is that they communicate through the language of the country of origin of the employee, that is Greek (69.7%) or Romanian (55.4%).

For Greece, English is pretty close as well, with 67.5%, when for Romania it is not low either, with 46.1%. Mixing languages is also pretty common in Greece, with 43.4% using both English and Greek, while in Romania this is the case only for a 16.2%.

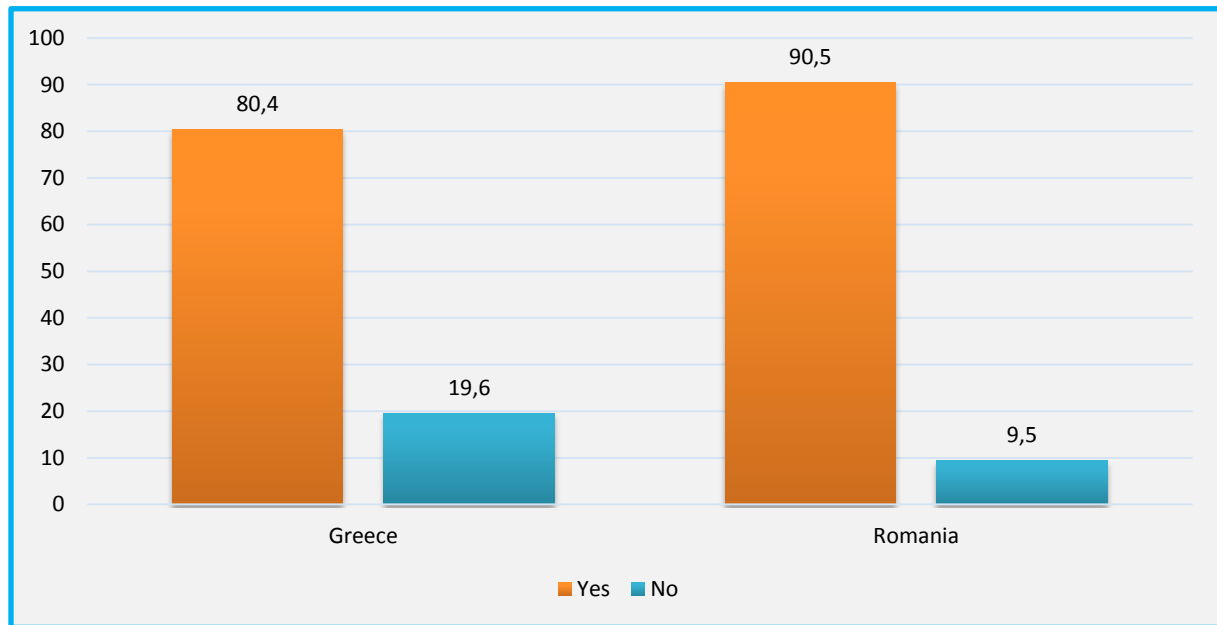
Figure 3-13 Difficulties in communication during the transaction

Employees were also asked if they have difficulties communicating during the transactions with Third Country Nationals and the results are pretty interesting.

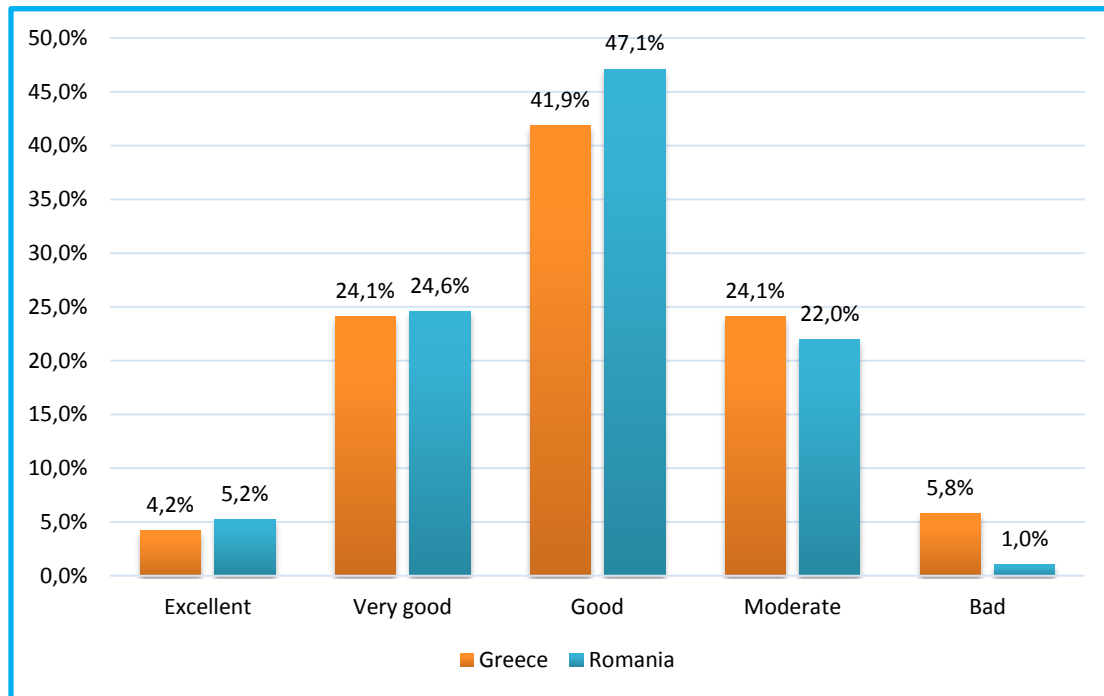
In Greece, 14.1% said they have none, 26.1% a little, 31.2% moderate, 19.1% enough and 9.5% very much. In Romania, 31.3% have no difficulties, 33.9% a little, 26.6% moderate, 7.3% enough and only 1% very much.

However, it is only when we combine the answers that the picture gets clearer. That is, if we combine “a little” and “moderate”, in Greece 57.3% gave this answer and in Romania 60.5%, whereas if we combine “enough” and “very much”, the percentage goes to 28.6% for Greece and to 8.3% for Romania.

It is therefore evident that in both countries the difficulties communicating with Third Country Nationals are pretty high.

Figure 3-14 Poor communication due to language barrier

As communication is easily the most important variable of our study, the questionnaire had several questions concerning this very factor. When asked, therefore, if they have poor communication with immigrants due to the language barriers, 80.4% of Greek employees and 90.5% of Romanian employees answered “yes” and only 19.6% of Greek employees and 9.5% of Romanian employees answered “no”.

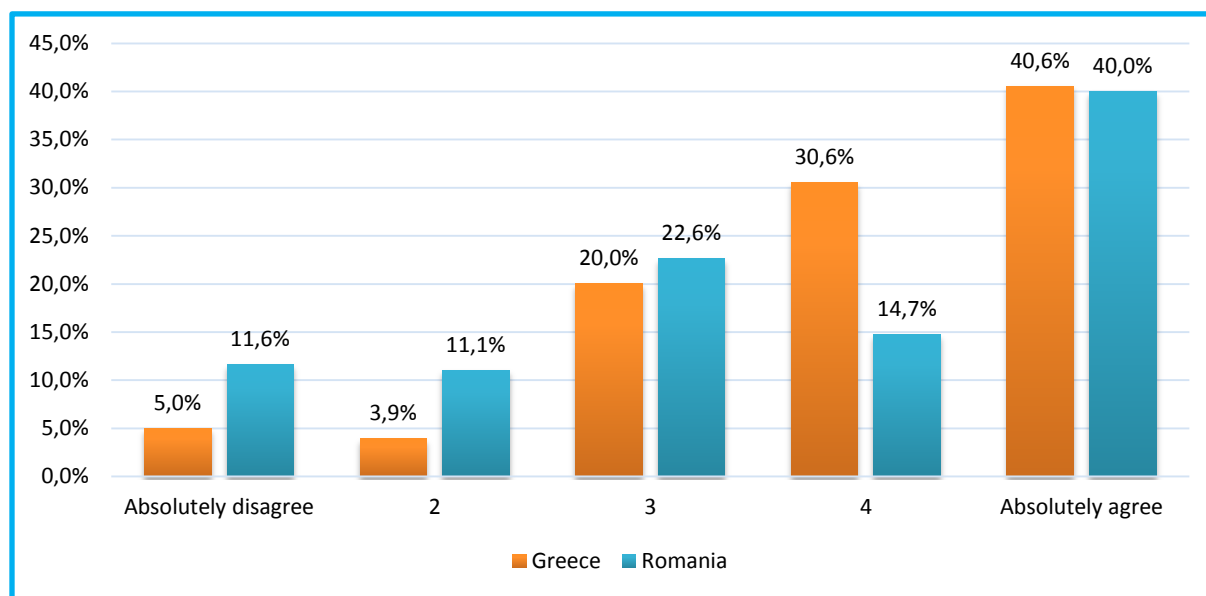
Figure 3-15 Evaluation of transactions

Also, employees were called to evaluate their transactions with Third Country Nationals customers. Both “excellent” and “bad” received very few answers, with “excellent” scoring only 4.2% in Greece and 5.2% in Romania and “bad” 5.8% in Greece and just 1% in Romania.

On the contrary, “very good” and “moderate” had higher and similar percentages in both countries, with 24.1% in Greece and 24.6% in Romania for “very good” and 24.1 in Greece and 22% in Romania for “moderate”.

Nearly half of the employees both in Romania and Greece think that their transactions with Third Country Nationals customers are “good”. Specifically, 41.9% in Greece and 47.1% in Romania.

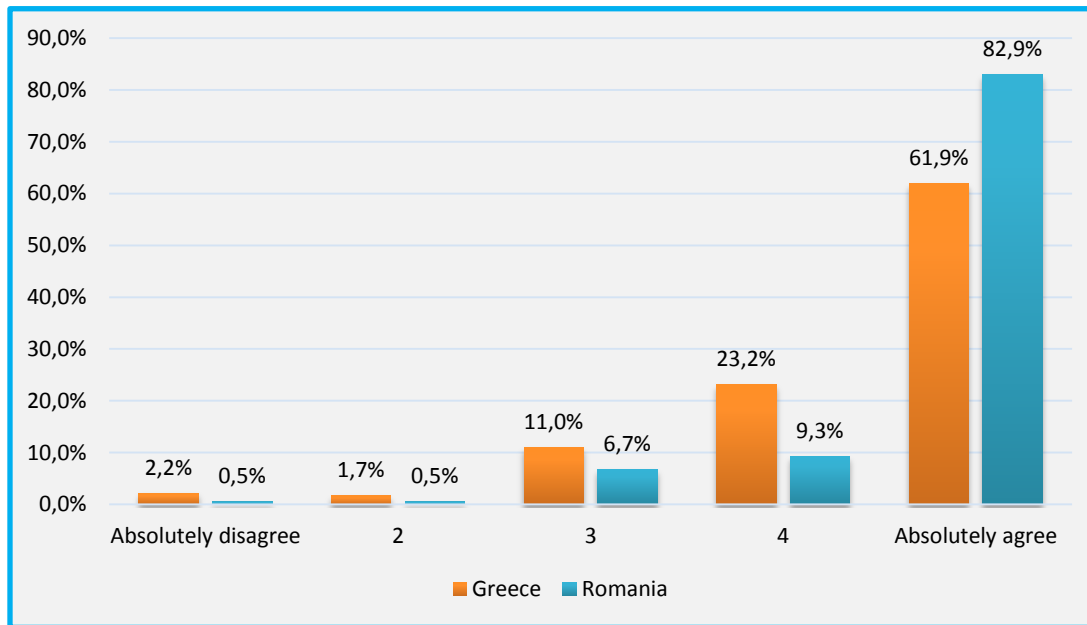
Figure 3-16 I am aware that in my daily work I will have customers that are TCN (immigrants and refugees) and I have been prepared for their service



The postal employees were also asked to answer how much they agree or disagree with some statements, in a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “absolutely disagree” and 5 “absolutely agree”. The first statement was “I am aware that in my daily work I will have customers that are TCN (immigrants and refugees) and I have been prepared for their service”.

So, 5% of Greek employees that answered the questionnaire answered 1, that is, absolutely disagree, 3.9% answered 2 (or disagree), 20% answered 3 (or neither agree nor disagree), 30.6% answered 4 (or agree) and 40.6% answered 5, that is absolutely agree.

Similarly, 11.6% of Romanian employees that participated in the study answered 1, 11.1% answered 2, 22.6% answered 3, 14.7% answered 4 and 40% answered 5.

Figure 3-17 I kindly greet with a smile the customer who is a TCN (immigrant and refugee)

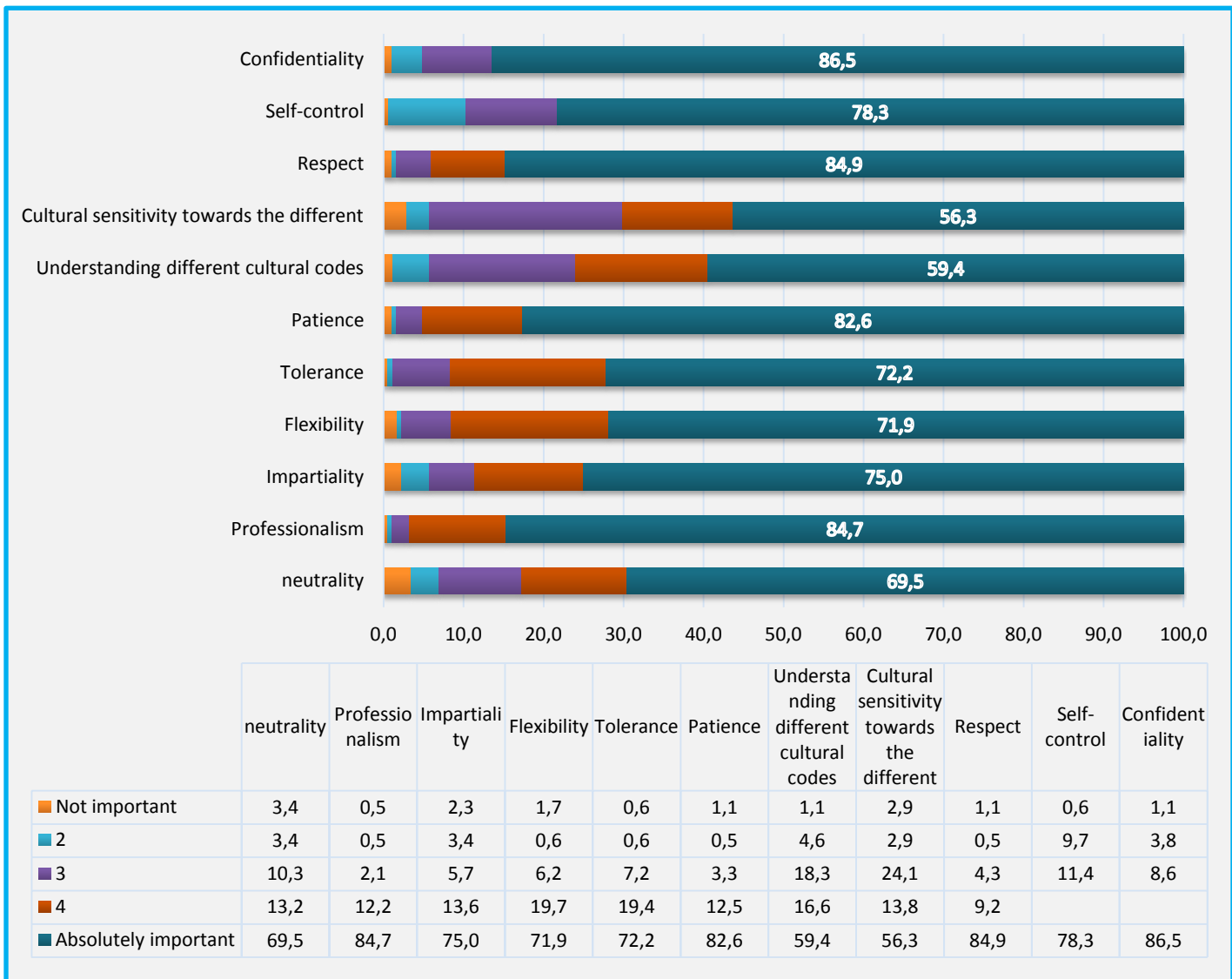
Similarly, in the statement “I kindly greet with a smile the customer who is a TCN (immigrant and refugee)”, both in Romania and in Greece a very low percentage gave the answers 1 and 2, representing “absolutely disagree” and “disagree”. Specifically, 2.2% Greeks and 0.5% Romanians answered 1, and 1.7% Greeks and 0.5% Romanians answered 2.

The answer 3, which means neither agree nor disagree, scored 11% in Greek employees and 6.7% in Romanian employees. Answer 4, or agree, got 23.2% in Greece and 9.3% in Romania.

The answer 5 of the scale, which means absolutely agree, got the most answers in both countries, 61.9% in Greece and an astounding 82.9% in Romania.

3.3.3 Suggestions for the improvement of services towards Third Country National customers in the postal offices

Figure 3-18 Skills and features useful for the transactions



In the questionnaire distributed in the Romanian post offices, there was a question added, concerning the skills and features they consider useful for their transactions with Third Country Nationals and even for a cultural mediator.

The question was posed as following: “The following list consists of skills and features that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator. How important do you think these features could be in your own service towards TCN customers?”. The answered were again in a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “Not Important”, 2 “A little important”, 3 “Neither important nor unimportant”, 4 “Important” and 5 “Absolutely important”.

So, considering confidentiality, 1.1% think it is “Not Important”, 3.8% think it is “A little Important”, 8.6% “Neither important nor unimportant”, no one thought it is “Important” and, finally, 86.5% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

Regarding self-control, 0.6% think it is “Not Important”, 9.7% think it is “A little Important”, 11.4% “Neither important nor unimportant”, no one thought it is “Important” and, finally, 78.3% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

With regards to respect, 1.1% think it is “Not Important”, 0.5% think it is “A little Important”, 4.3% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 9.2% “Important” and, finally, 84.9% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

When it comes to cultural sensitivity toward the different, 2.9% think it is “Not Important”, 2.9% think it is “A little Important”, 24.1% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 13.8% “Important” and, finally, 56.3% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

Considering understanding different cultural codes, 1.1% think it is “Not Important”, 4.6% think it is “A little Important”, 18.3% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 16.6% “Important” and, finally, 59.4% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

Regarding patience, 1.1% think it is “Not Important”, 0.5% think it is “A little Important”, 3.3% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 12.5% “Important” and, finally, 82.6% consider it “Absolutely important”.

Regarding tolerance, 0.6% think it is “Not Important”, 0.6% think it is “A little Important”, 7.2% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 19.4% “Important” and, finally, 72.2% consider it “Absolutely important”.

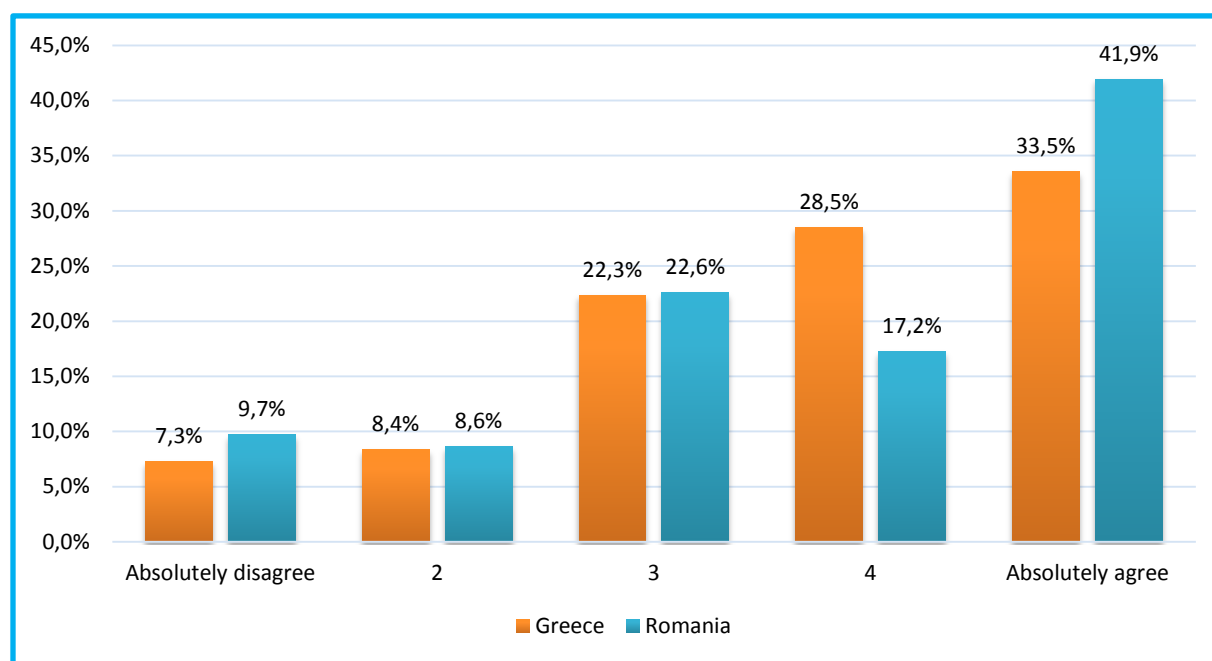
With regards to flexibility, 1.7% think it is “Not Important”, 0.6% think it is “A little Important”, 6.2% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 19.7% “Important” and, finally, 71.9% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

For impartiality, 2.3% think it is “Not Important”, 3.4% think it is “A little Important”, 5.7% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 13.6% “Important” and, finally, 75% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

Also, for professionalism, 0.5% think it is “Not Important”, 0.5% think it is “A little Important”, 2.1% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 12.2% “Important” and, finally, 84.7% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

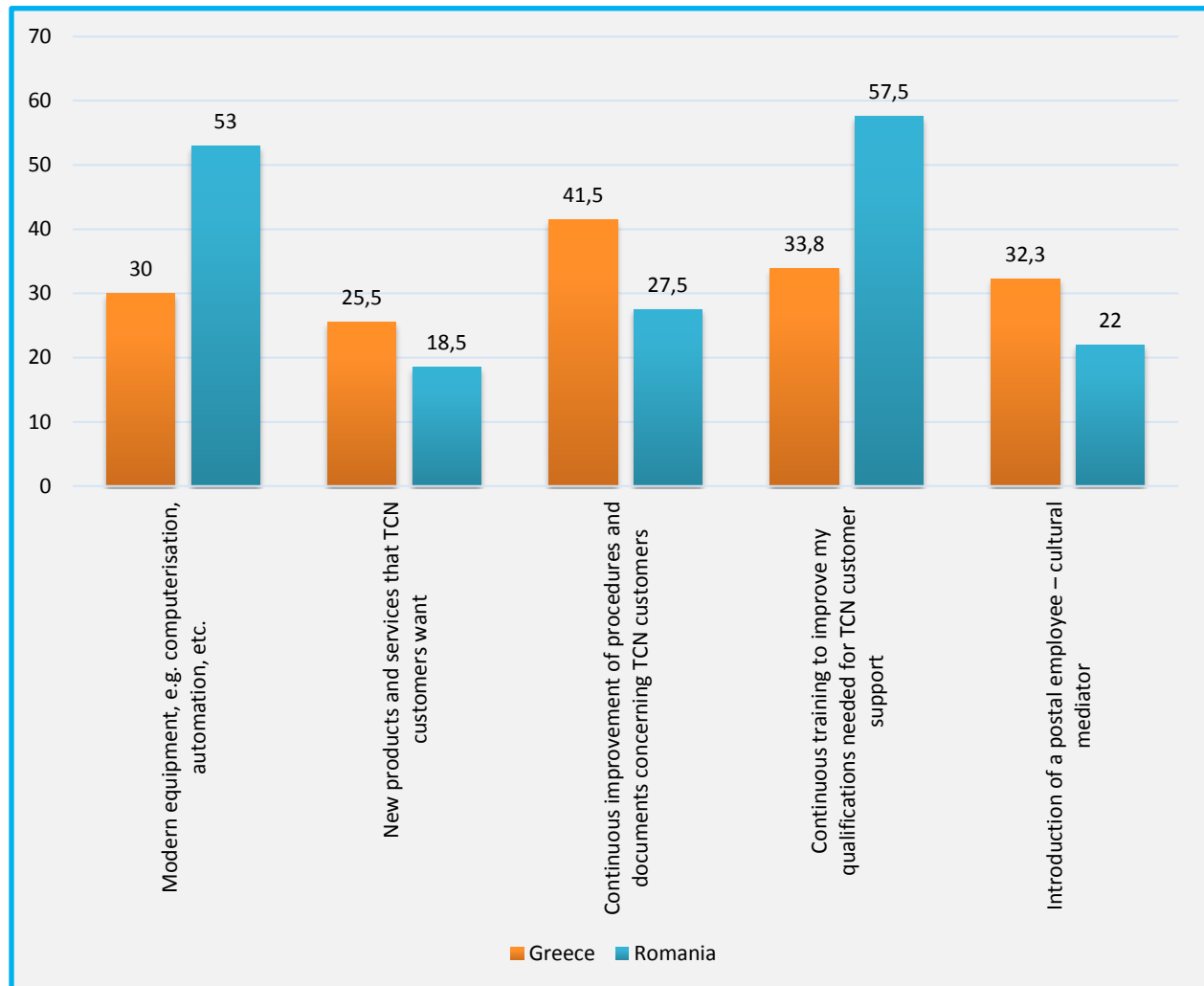
Lastly, regarding neutrality, 3.4% think it is “Not Important”, 3.4% think it is “A little Important”, 10.3% “Neither important nor unimportant”, 13.2% “Important” and, finally, 69.5% consider it as “Absolutely important”.

Figure 3-19 The Postal service must design and provide new products and services that corresponds to the needs of the TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees)



The postal employees of both Romania and Greece were also asked to answer how much they agree or disagree with the statement “The Postal service must design and provide new products and services that corresponds to the needs of the TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees)”, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “absolutely disagree”, 2 “disagree”, 3 “neither agree nor disagree”, 4 “agree” and 5 “absolutely agree”.

The answers were pretty similar between the two countries. That is, 9.7% of Greeks and 7.3% of Romanians answered that they “absolutely disagree”, 8.4% of Greeks and 8.6% of Romanians that they “disagree”, 22.3% of Greeks and 22.6% of Romanians “neither agree nor disagree”, 28.5% of Greeks and 17.2% of Romanians that they “agree” and, lastly, 33.5% of Greeks and 41.9% of Romanians answered that they “absolutely agree”.

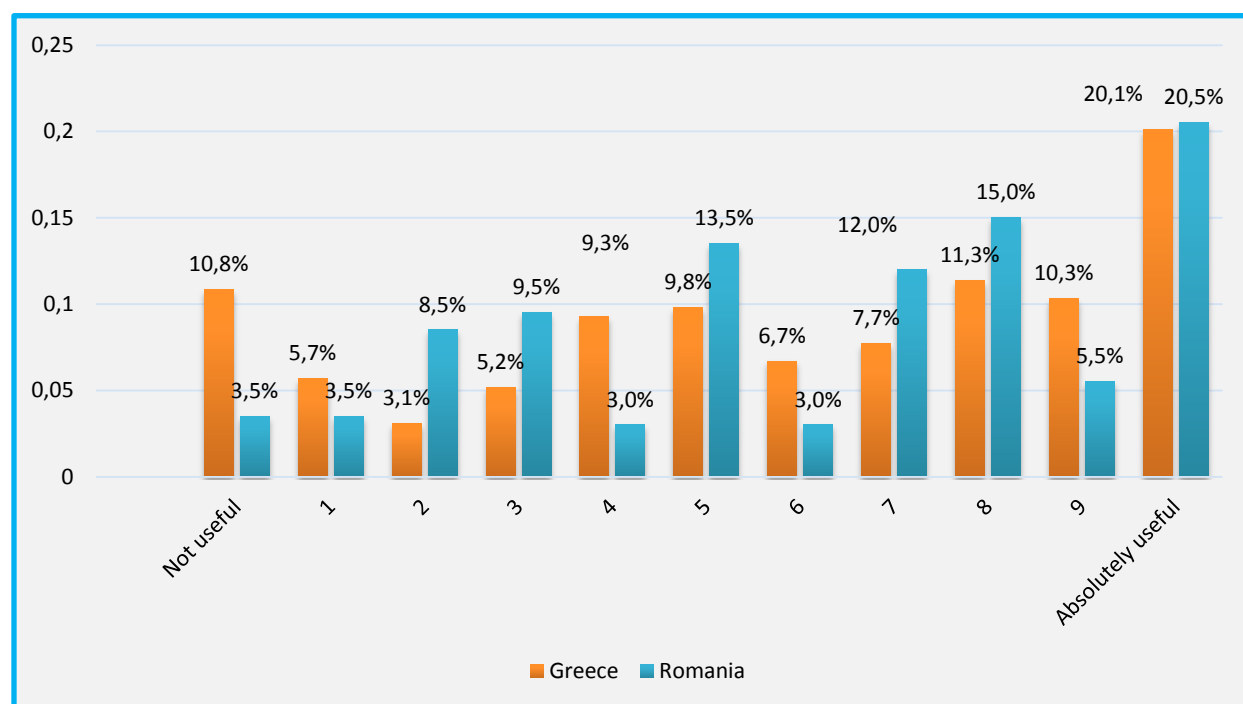
Figure 3-20 What would improve the transactions

Romanian and Greek employees were also asked what they think would improve the transactions. The answers included “Modern equipment, e.g. computerization, automation, etc.”, “New products and services that TCN customers want”, “Continuous improvement of procedures and documents concerning TCN customers”, “Continuous training to improve my qualifications needed for TCN customer support” and “Introduction of a postal employee- cultural mediator”.

So, in Romania continuous training and modern equipment received the most positive answers, with 57.5% for continuous training and 53% for modern equipment. Continuous improvement of procedures came third, 27.5% and introduction of a cultural mediator fourth, with 22%. Finally, 18.5% believe they need new products that TCN customers want.

In Greece, now, answers were more divided. 41.5% thinks continuous improvement of procedures is needed and 33.8% continuous training. 32.3% deem the introduction of a cultural mediator important and 30% the modern equipment. Finally, 25.5% think having new products that TCN customers want is important.

Figure 3-21 How useful do you think it would be to know and provide general information to TCN customers regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing

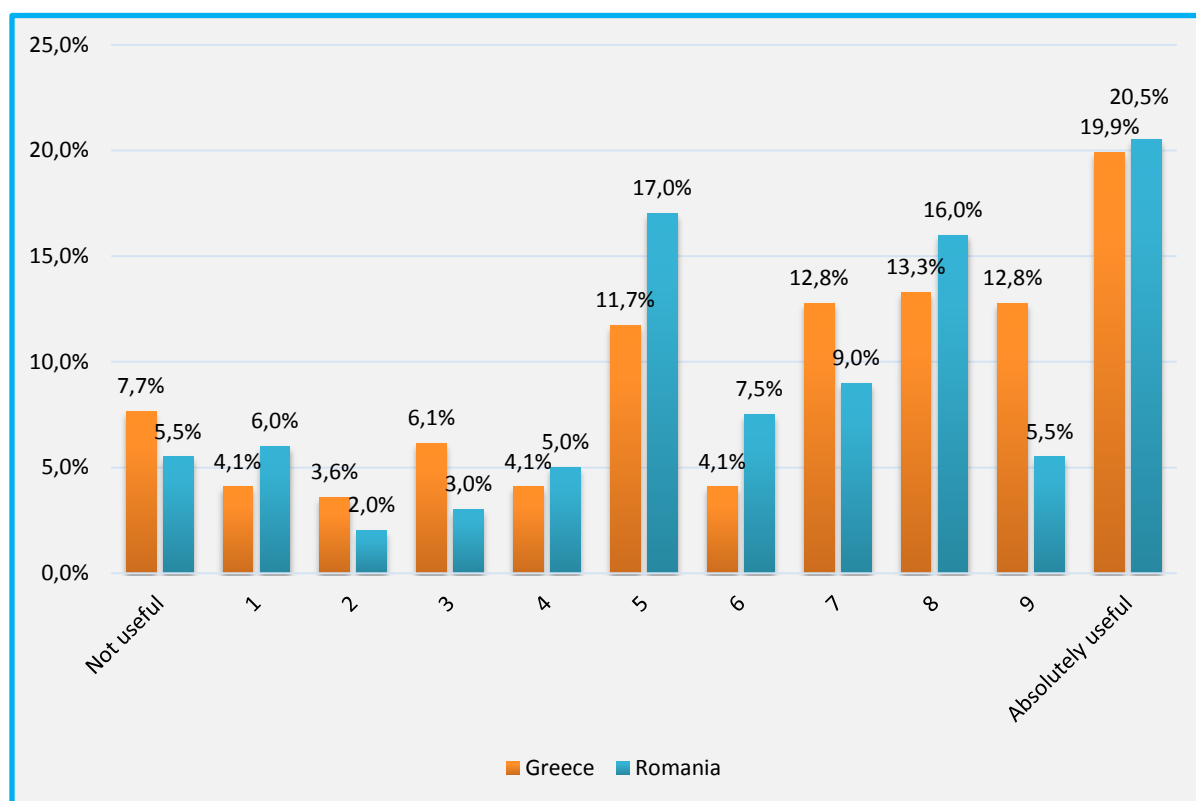


The postal employees of both countries were asked to answer how useful do they think it would be to know and provide general information to TCN customers regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “not useful”, and 10 “absolutely useful”.

So, in Greece 10.8% think it is not useful, whereas in Romania only 3.5%. Answers 1 and 2 got a score of 8.8% in Greece and 12% in Romania. Similarly, answers 3 and 4 were given by 14.5% of Greek employees and 12.5% of Romanian employees. 9.8% of Greeks and 13.5% of Romanians gave the middle answer, that is, 5.

Accordingly, 14.4% of Greek personnel and 15% of Romanian personnel gave the answers 6 and 7 and 21.6% of Greeks and 20.5% of Romanians the answers 8 and 9. Lastly, 20.1% in Greece and 20.5% in Romania think it is absolutely useful.

Figure 3-22 How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector regarding immigration, refugees and their legal status?



Finally, the postal employees of the two countries were asked to answer how useful do they think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector regarding immigration, refugees and their legal status, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “not useful”, and 10 “absolutely useful”.

Therefore, in Greece 7.7% think it is not useful, whereas in Romania 5.5%. Answers 1 and 2 got a score of 7.7% in Greece and 8% in Romania. Similarly, answers 3 and 4 were given by 10.2% of Greek employees and 8% of Romanian employees. 11.7% of Greeks and 17% of Romanians gave the middle answer, that is, 5.

Similarly, 16.9% of Greek personnel and 16.5% of Romanian personnel gave the answers 6 and 7 and 26.1% of Greeks and 21.5% of Romanians the answers 8 and 9. Lastly, 20.5% of employees in Greece 19.9% in Romania think it is absolutely useful.

3.4 Qualitative research results: in-depth interviews

3.4.1 In-depth interviews with employees of the Hellenic Post

3.4.1.1 Profile of the participants

For the in-depth interviews with employees of the Hellenic Post, six employees were interviewed, all working or having worked in branches of the Hellenic Post in central Athens, as well as in the suburbs. They were all women and their experience in Hellenic Post varies from 6 months to 35 years.

More specifically, the first employee interviewed was a woman, having worked with 6-month contracts during the period of 2015 and 2016, in the branches of the city center and more specifically those of Kypseli and Sarantaporos. She had direct contact with customers who are Third Country Nationals.

The second employee interviewed was a woman currently working in the Strategy and Development Division and having worked for many years in a branch of the Hellenic Post in Agios Dimitrios. She has direct contact with customers who are Third Country Nationals.

The third employee interviewed was also a woman currently working in the Strategy and Development Division. She worked up to 2015 in a branch of the Hellenic Post in Hymettus. She has direct contact with customers who are Third Country Nationals. The fourth and the fifth employees interviewed were women as well.

Finally, the sixth employee interviewed was a woman currently working at a central branch of the Hellenic Post in downtown Athens. In the last 35 years, she has worked in several branches of the company. She had direct contact with customers who are Third Country Nationals.

The interviews were conducted in the premises of the Hellenic Post offices. Three interviews were conducted on 02/04/2019, one on 19/04/2019, one on 29/04/2019 and one on 19/05/2019.

3.4.1.2 Profile and characteristics of the immigrants-customers of the Hellenic Post as perceived by the employees

Regarding the gender of the immigrant customers, all employees responded that they are mostly or only men. As one employee puts it, the perceptions towards women in their country of origin has a part to play in the fact that mostly men are responsible for making use of the postal services: *“because in Muslim countries the perception is that women are not fit to run errands and yes, you see more men, I think.”* The age of immigrant customers varies from 18 to 55.

As regards their ethnicity, responds varied. There are a lot of immigrants from the Balkan region (such as Albania, Bulgaria and Romania), but mostly they come from Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran and African countries, such as Nigeria and Egypt and less so from China and Russia. Therefore, as regards their religion, they are mostly Muslims.

The perception of the educational level of the immigrants varies from low to not particularly low and not particularly high, something which becomes evident also from the language they are speaking, as while some of them speak Greek and some English, most of them speak neither Greek nor English. The employees note that the language and the educational level are what affect the most the servicing of immigrant customers.

Concerning their work and financial status, they seem mostly unemployed and therefore they are in a very bad economic situation. However, some, living in Greece for a long time, have found a stable work. And of course, there were some who, after so many years in Greece, had found a permanent job and thus raised their family, educated their children, *“they were hard-working people, trying to earn their living, sometimes they earn it, sometimes they don’t. So, they were always worried if they would have a job the next day”*. However, one of the employees notes that:

"I think they are starting with good financial status from there [their country] and so they make the decision to leave ... I think they are people who have the financial capacity to give the package [the money] that will remove them from their country, where they can no longer live, and then are trying to work to be able to live a decent life."

Also, a lot of immigrants that are businessmen mostly use shipping companies instead of the Hellenic posts. As one employee puts it: *"The professionals, from what I see, do not work so much with Hellenic Posts but with shipping companies. They have a different kind of cooperation. So, this is an opportunity for us to approach these categories."*

Furthermore, a lot of them are living in hot spots, in refugee camps, or in homes that are not far better than hot spots: *"Too many people live in one home together and it shows – [...] from the clothes they wear- that they live in poverty."*

3.4.1.3 Products and services of the Hellenic Post used by immigrants

According to the employees interviewed, Third Countries Nationals use two kind of services offered by the Hellenic Post, the financial services and the sending and receiving of packages.

In particular, they send money to their relatives in their home country and other countries, particularly through the Western Union system, but through checks also. They also send checks to friends imprisoned within Greece.

Regarding packages, they both send and receive them, usually to their home country, which are big and bulky and *"are not the usual packages in boxes, but are wrapped in cloth bags"*. As one employee puts it, the reason why immigrants choose the Hellenic Posts to send packages to their home countries is mostly a financial one:

"I believe that if Third Country Nationals, for example Nigerians, had the opportunity to ship goods to Nigeria with another company, they might as well

have use it. The Hellenic Post is simply the only provider that does this. And maybe the most economical. There may be private companies as well, but I think they've looked it up and it costs them a lot more. So, I think, the Hellenic Posts provide a cheap way to make these transfers.”

They also send gifts in Christmas, name days and birthdays of the relatives, for which they are always most anxious about, *“and they were eagerly awaiting, saying: “I sent for my daughter, for my daughter’s birthday”. And they were asking again and again when will they be able to receive it”*.

They use less so the mailing services: *“they are not interested in letters [...] You rarely see a Nigerian seeking to send a letter”*. When they do send letters, they might include documents, such as passports, which is forbidden and therefore are often returned.

For most of the employees interviewed, when asked about the potential differentiation of needs between Third Country Nationals and Greeks as clients in the Hellenic Post Offices, the answer was that they have the same needs. *“They, Greeks and immigrants that is, have the same need, to send a registered mail and have it arrive”*.

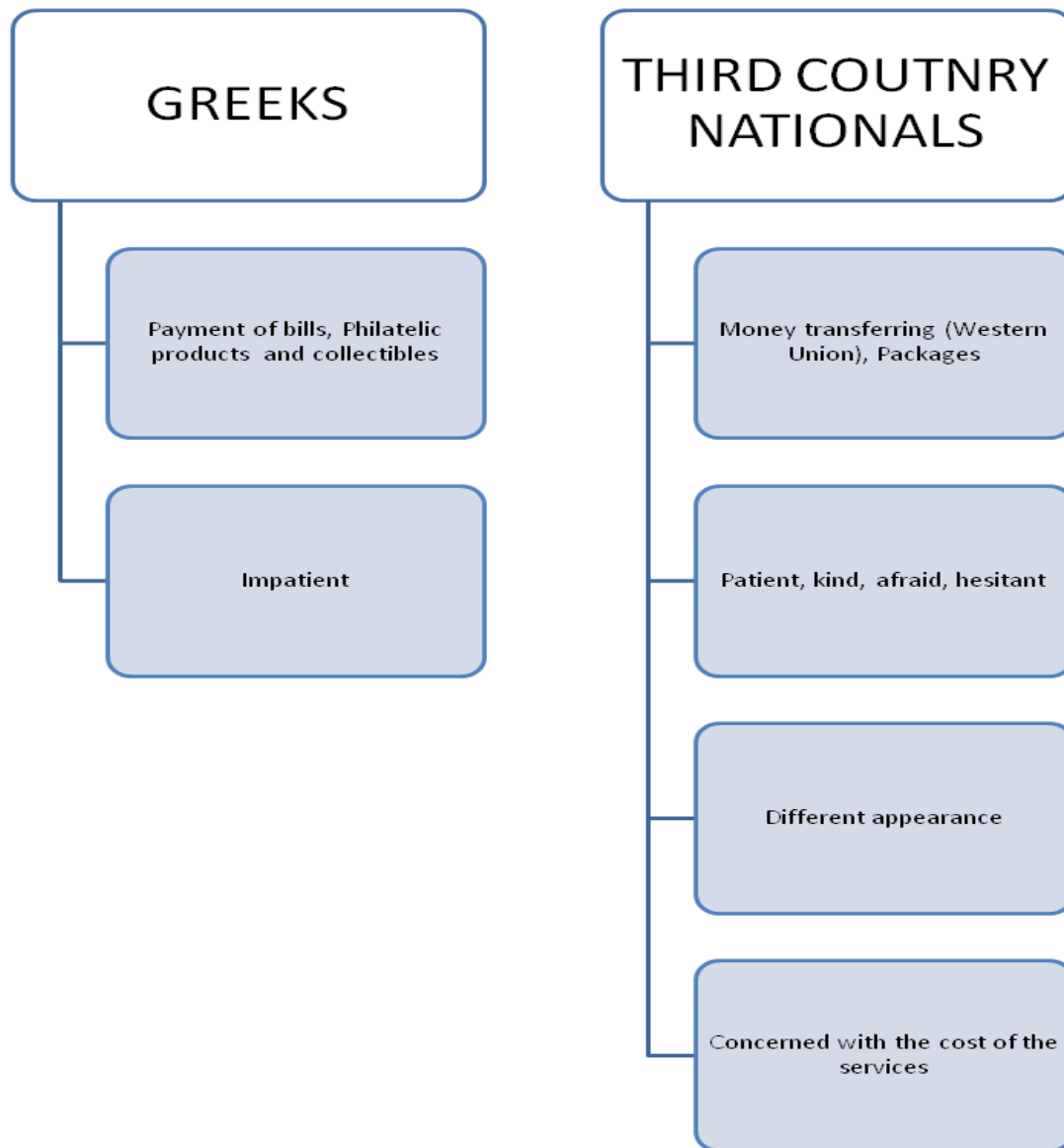
There was one employee, though, that considered that immigrants have different needs from the Greeks, which are, however, covered by the existing products and services of the Hellenic Post Offices, while another one states that *“I think this is their need: to send money and products to their country, I think that's their longing.”*

Differences between immigrants and native Greeks as customers of the Hellenic Post

According to the employees interviewed, immigrants and native Greeks are quite different as customers. *“I definitely find differences, they are not the “typical” Greek customers, as they are people of a different culture”*. At the same time, the employees are quite familiarized with seeing immigrants, as *“they are here for so many years [...] seeing a foreigner will not surprise us”*.

The main differences are seen in the graph below.

3.4.1.4 Main differences between Greeks and Third Country Nationals as customers in Hellenic Posts



One of the first areas where Third Country Nationals are differentiated, is the products and services used. As analyzed previously, immigrants use mostly the services of the Hellenic Post Offices for transferring money and for sending packages.

On the other side, Greeks mostly use the post offices for paying their bills and buying philatelic products and collectibles. When they do send packages, they are different from those of immigrants, as they are not as big.

Furthermore, Third Country Nationals are easily differentiated from Greeks due to their outward appearance, such as the color of their skin and their clothes. Especially in some branches where fewer immigrants are serviced, when an immigrant with different clothing arrives, it is more noticeable:

“Well, I remember when a customer that came was wearing a scarf, the burgh, well, our other customers were looking at her. They were looking at her surprised, because it was the first time, in fact, it was one of the rare times we had such a client in my branch.”

Behavior is also very different, as Greeks tend to be more impatient, losing their temper while waiting, *“they go crazy, they want to leave as soon as possible, they yell”* especially when the transaction between the post officers and Third Country Nationals is prolonged. However, their dissatisfaction is mainly stemming from the bad economic situation of the country. Due to the economic hardships, Greeks, generally a hospitable people, have become more ill-tempered and less tolerant towards foreigners.

On the other side, Third Country Nationals due to the hardships they have endured, are afraid or hesitant. As they familiarize with the process, though, they become less hesitant.

Third Country Nationals are people who have suffered and therefore are sometimes angry and uncomfortable during the transactions in the post offices, feeling that they are in a disadvantage due to the language barriers, some even getting angry due to that. As one employee puts it, though:

“Well, they are not the typical Greek customer, because they are people of a different culture, they have been through hardships (from what I see on television about how many of them have arrived in our country, that they have crossed the sea or lost some of their loved ones. So, this sadness, this frustration

and the unknown of how they will survive, coming to our country -many didn't want to stay here, right? We have all heard this, that they want to continue their journey to Europe, for a better life than our country would offer them- that is their main characteristic.”

It is also pointed out that they often do not know exactly what service to use and how to ask for it. *“They are like lost people; they have a great communication problem and probably are not supported enough.”*

In general, the behavior of foreigners vis-à-vis ELTA employees seems to be better than that of Greeks. Although immigrant customers are presented as frightened people, they are more polite than the Greeks, as the latter assume, they have to be serviced by the organization.

Therefore, immigrants, considering that being serviced by the post officers is not a given to them, “if you do something for them, they appreciate it” and are therefore more patient, kinder, and smiling. They are more cooperative and more receptive from Greeks due to their overriding need to complete the transaction. As one employee puts it:

“Greeks consider the Hellenic Post as a part of the public sector, and therefore take for granted that if they come to the Organization they will be serviced, because you are a civil servant and you have to do your job. Immigrant don't have that [attitude]. They have the attitude of a frightened man coming into a place he does not know how and if he will be serviced.”

Also, Third Country Nationals have better knowledge of which are the rush hours and try to not use the post offices during those hours. Knowing that in the mornings there are fewer customers, they even await in the early morning, before the opening of the post offices, so that they can be serviced quickly.

A difference regarding the economic situation is also observed, as Third Country Nationals often seem concerned with the cost of the services, something that does not happen in the case of native Greeks. However, the products and services of the Hellenic Post being of considerably low cost, the economic factor does not really inhibit Third Country Nationals to use them.

Lastly, immigrants are accompanied, usually by a Greek person so that the transaction runs more smoothly.

In general, one can say that the main differences between Greeks and Third Country Nationals are cultural ones: *“they do not know our own cultural codes, how we function as a society, so they transfer their own, because they are in the phase of entering a new environment, they do not yet know the rules, the norms”*.

3.4.1.5 Length of transactions due to the language barrier

Generally, it is observed throughout all the interviews with the employees of the Hellenic Post that the main differentiation between Third Country Nationals and Greek natives is the length of transactions, due to bad communication, poor knowledge of the Greek or English language and poor information.

The lack of knowledge, from the part of many Third Country Nationals of either the Greek, the English or even French is considered as the main source of the communication difficulties between them, which therefore inhibits Third Country Nationals from understanding the processes of the Hellenic Post and therefore results in more time required to service this category of clients:

“There are some [transactions}, like sending a letter or a parcel that understanding is very easy. But if it is more complex, if it requires identification, which may require collaboration with other services, there is a difficulty for us to communicate it and to be fully understood, for them to understand what is happening and to respond.”

It is also mentioned that the specific difficulties when servicing immigrants focus not only on the problem of communication due to the language gap, but also, immigrants don't always have with them the necessary forms in their own language, as well as the translated ones (in Greek). “A

man wanted to receive money; he didn't have a passport with him, he knew neither English nor Greek, and it took half an hour [to complete the transaction].”

Another employee also notes that despite the efforts of the employees, even when rudimental communication is accomplished, the Third Country Nationals customers neither know which are the necessary documents they have to bring along so they can be serviced, nor do they know a common language, such as Greek or English to be able to communicate. Due to this fact, the employee is obliged to devote more time to accommodate these customers.

Sometimes, the duration of a transaction is prolonged due to the kind of transaction, as for example Third Country Nationals send more often packages, which requires a process that takes more time for the employees to complete. Also, the identification process is longer, with a lot of additional paperwork required.

But, how do employees and Third Country Nationals overcome this language barrier and actually succeed in completing a transaction? First of all, even the most elementary knowledge of Greek or English, from the part of migrants, is very useful and actually facilitates the communication between the parties involved and, in the end, the transaction is completed faster.

When this is not the case, the employees that participated in this study noted that if the employees of the Hellenic Post are willing to help and understand the immigrant clients, by using some basic words and nouns the conciliation can be achieved. Sometimes, even had signals are used/

One interviewee even mentioned that the employees of the Hellenic Post often write and complete forms of immigrant clients that the latter are unable to complete and that they are trying to retrieve the required data, for example the address and the place of residence of the immigrants.

At the end of the day, it is patience and willingness from both parties involved that plays the most important role in achieving a satisfying communication level. When it comes to immigrants, their patience, cooperation and receptiveness, as well as their trust vis-à-vis the Hellenic Post employees significantly helps the whole process.

3.4.1.6 Lack of information

One of the major problems which creates further obstacles for the interactions of Third Country Nationals and employees of the postal offices, is the lack of sources of information for the first.

Where for Greeks the Hellenic Post “*is a part of their everyday life, they know it*” and therefore they have access to printed materials and brochures in stores, information via visits to any Hellenic Post branch and through direct contact with employees, through other Greeks other website of the Hellenic Post, which, as it is available in their mother tongue, is more suitable for them, immigrants have access to none of the above.

Regarding the Hellenic Post website, for example, it is only available in Greek and in English and is therefore inaccessible to immigrants who do not speak neither. Here, the language barrier emerges once again as an inhibitor for immigrants. Also, there are Third Country Nationals who do not even have internet access to begin with.

It is noted that Third Country Nationals are not as informed as other immigrants, who, knowing either Greek or English, use the internet page of the Hellenic Post to get informed about the provided services and are better prepared, having with them all the necessary paperwork. More importantly it is through the migrant communities that most information is relayed:

“Well, I imagine the team has [...] in organizations. Of course, I think, even from the experience they have in the branches, when they find a branch that services them, they will others to go there, don't go there.”

One employee, though, mentions that the website of Hellenic post is the main source of information for immigrants about its services and products. She believes that immigrants use the internet to inform themselves, contrary to the Greeks who prefer to address any questions to the postal employees themselves.

One of the main sources of information for Third Country Nationals regarding the products and services of the Hellenic Post is their homogeneous people or organizations, to which they place more trust. Usually, this information is disseminated orally.

Moreover, immigrants are informed about the products and services of the Hellenic Post from various promotional activities that take place every year and include information in the most frequently spoken languages by them. For example, there are Western Union information leaflets in various languages, which aim to facilitate the provision of information to them.

Therefore, as there is no structured source of information specifically for immigrants, only if something is of great interest to them, they will look up for it. Because of the fact that they have considerable financial problems and the fact that when they are in need of a product or a service it is often for survival purposes, *“they will have better knowledge of them than Greeks in many cases”* and so they appear better prepared than the Greeks.

Their lack of information is highlighted by the fact that they have no prior knowledge of the need to bring along their passport so that they use some of the services of the post offices, such as receiving registered letters or sending money.

In the end, however, it is noted that even if a Third Country National is not aware of a product, the employees try to facilitate them and inform them about it.

3.4.1.7 Need for specific programs for immigrants in the Hellenic Post

According to some of the employees interviewed, there have already existed some programs aimed at informing immigrants, Third Country Nationals, such as the brochures released by Western Union for its services which provided information in various languages, which was advertised in the regions where immigrants reside and received positive feedback from them. The ultimate goal of these programs was *“to facilitate the processes these people go through and use in the country”*.

Also, in 2015-2016 the Hellenic post, in collaboration with the Municipal Radio Station of Athens 9.84, created a brochure that was released in three languages (Greek, English and Arabic) and aimed at better information of immigrant customers.

There have also existed promotional programs, such as a discounting policy in sending parcels to a specific ethnicity for a period of time. It was also mentioned that the Management of the post

offices decided that a passport and a residence permit was required so that Third Country Nationals could be serviced.

However, several employees reported that there was no specific program implemented for informing or servicing immigrants in the Hellenic Post and that it is the employees themselves who take it upon them and try to inform and help them as much as they can.

It is therefore considered highly important that such programs are designed and implemented and that the main purpose of these programs will be to provide faster and better information to immigrants, which could in turn lead to more frequent transactions and result in higher profits for the Hellenic Post.

According to an employee, special programs should be developed for immigrant customers as it says: "It is a new-targeted target group with special characteristics" and a survey could be carried out for the immigrants themselves about how happy they are and what their needs may not be covered by the products provided and by their service at ELTA.

As another employee puts, it:

"Yes, I think it is necessary because we have a lot of immigrants now. It is a target group that we can also target commercially, increasing the profits of the company by informing more and more immigrants, so that they come to our branches. [...] "The whole process with immigrants requires a lot of patience, they are people who are very afflicted and cannot easily communicate what they want. We must find ways to facilitate our own work and our own position."

Some examples of the programs that could take place would be to create leaflets in the most spoken languages of Third Country Nationals and generally, to translate any informational tool in other languages, other than Greek and English.

Also, branches with more load of work concerning Third Country Nationals should have more employees able to service them better. It would be a good idea if these programs were to distinguish people who can serve the large volume of immigrants these branches service, so as to have *"the right person in the right place"*. For example, people that are more patient and open

and have empathy should be utilized more by the company. *“There are people who have empathy and there are people who don't. The company should make use of those who have.”*

Furthermore, employees also referred to the need of cultural mediators. It is rendered very important that the Hellenic Posts provided to its immigrant customers the opportunity to be serviced by a homogeneous employee, who would know very well their language and culture; *“it is needed, they should exist”*. As an employee said, *“delivering services from a foreigner employee, if feasible, would definitely be very good”*.

A cultural mediator, therefore, should be put in place at the branches with the most Third Country Nationals customers, to accompany them, to collect the necessary papers for them and to provide them with help and psychological support.

However, not all employees think that having a foreign employee as a cultural mediator would be useful for their branches, as some believe that in their own branch the demand is lower. These employees do not discard the idea of a cultural mediator altogether, they just advise that they should be placed in the branches that most need it.

One potential drawback with that would be that they might be perceived as a threat on the part of the other Greek employees due to the economic difficulties in the country and that could even provoke reactions.

It is also added that educational programs could be developed for the employees of the Hellenic Post Office for the *“Management and Treatment of Immigrant Customers in Service”*.

It is proposed that the implementation - on an educational level - of an information program on ELTA employees who are in direct contact with the immigrants (i.e. the employees of the mailboxes and postmen) would very much help to reach the best possible approach and information of the immigrants for post offices.

Moreover, in these educational programs, it should be of high importance to teach employees the necessary institutional and legal framework that refers to the migrant groups they are mostly servicing, so as to help them give the customers the information needed and complete the transactions faster and more efficiently.

Another suggestion was that there could exist a collaboration between the Hellenic Post and an NGO, which would aim at the implementation of a basic information to immigrants that would

take place in the camp and would cover the learning of basic terminology in English used in the transactions in the Hellenic Post offices.

Finally, an employee also referred to a previous program of the Hellenic Posts, aimed mostly at the Greek population, the social mail, which allowed customers to send parcels for free. He argued that it could also be a key goal of the programs towards Third Country Nationals: *“They could do something similar for immigrants, for some time, in a social context”*.

3.4.2 In-depth interviews with immigrants

3.4.2.1 Profile of the participants

The first customer interviewed was a man and he was interviewed in Greek. The second customer was a woman from Somalia, having leaved in Greece for 10 years; her interview was in Greek.

The third customer was a man, coming from Afghanistan and having lived in Greece for 14 years; he was also interviewed in Greek. He mentioned that employees of the Hellenic Post have his phone number and they call him whenever they have a communicational problem with another Third Country National and he speaks directly with them, so as to help them. The fourth customer was also a man, who lives with his wife and two children in central Athens. He was interviewed in Greek as well.

The fifth Third Country National customer is a man from Congo, leaving in Greece for 2,5 years; he was interviewed in English. The sixth participant was a woman and she was also interviewed in English.

The seventh participant was a man from Pakistan, who has lived in Greece for 8 months. He was interviewed with the help of a translator, in English. The eighth customer was also a man from Pakistan, who has lived in Greece for four months.

The ninth customer who was interviewed was a man from Afghanistan, having lived in Greece for 1.5 years. He was interviewed in English, Finally, the last customer was a man from Kashmir, in Pakistan, who has lived in Greece for 2 years and was also interviewed in English.

It has to be noted that all of the immigrants interviewed had a great difficulty to expand on their answers and they usually just answered with a yes or a no. They also had often difficulty understanding many questions and the interviewers explained them two or three times even.

This is indicative and also reinforcing their statements that they have difficulties communicating with the Hellenic Posts' employees, because even when communicating in English, they themselves have also difficulty understanding everything and expressing themselves as they would like to.

3.4.2.2 Services and products of the Hellenic Posts that Third Country Nationals mostly use

The services of the Hellenic Posts that the immigrants interviewed use vary. Most of them use only one service, while some a combination of them.

Of course, the most common reason to use the Hellenic Posts is to send to and receive money from their relatives, usually to their home countries through the Western Union service. There was however one immigrant who received money from friends that work in the islands of Greece.

Having a savings account seems also very popular, especially in order to receive allowances. One immigrant noted that she has an account where a state allowance is paid and she makes transfers of that money to other people.

They also use the Hellenic Posts to pay their bills, not only in Greece but in other countries as well. It is rarer that they use it to send or receive letters. One immigrant, however, said that she used it to send the required documents to the schools of her children.

Regarding the differences with Greeks in the use of the Hellenic Posts services and products, most of the interviewed immigrants had either no knowledge or they thought that there was no difference. Only one noted that Greeks send more letters. They also think that their needs and Greeks' needs are the same.

3.4.2.3 Being serviced in the Hellenic Posts

When it comes, now, to their servicing from the employees of the Hellenic Posts, the immigrants interviewed were asked to describe the employees of the Hellenic Post Offices, if they are treated equally with the Greeks and if they are satisfied from the servicing.

Therefore, when asked to describe the employees of the Hellenic Post offices, only a few talked about their gender, saying that they are mostly women, or both women and men. They made no remarks on their age, ethnicity, education or other demographic characteristics.

Their remarks were mostly concentrated on their behavior. Most of the Third Country Nationals interviewed said that the employees of the Hellenic Post were kind, while some noted that some of them are nice while others not so much or that sometimes the employees are not so willing to service them.

What they are mostly concerned about, however, is the language they speak. First of all, it should be noted that there is no reference, in any of the interviews, of an employee that speaks their language.

Therefore, regarding the English language, the participants were divided. There were a few that said that all of the employees speak the English language. Fortunately, there was no reference of never meeting an employee who does not speak at all English.

Most of the participants, however, said that some employees speak only the Greek language and there are some that speak the English language. But among them, only a few noted that the use of the English language was good.

Most said that they speak it a little or even that they don't speak it that well. And even when they do speak English, it is not the preferred language to use among the employees: *“they sometimes speak English, but they want to speak Greek.”*

When specifically asked if they have problems communicating with the employees, almost all responded positively: *“yes, I have big problems”*. An immigrant that speaks the English language on a very good level said that *“of course I have problems, they only know the Greek language”*.

On another occasion, when asked if the employees speak the English language, they also responded negatively, saying that *“no, they don’t speak English because they priority to their own language of Greek because Greek people, you know better than me, they give priority to their language...”*, or even that *“the problem is these men, you have to speak English, you have to be proper speak... Most people can’t speak English, it is a problem, yes.”*

Of course, there were some participants in the interviews, who knew the Greek language, who had no problem communicating with the staff of the Hellenic Posts:

“Look, as I know the language, wherever I go, it is very easy for me. But somebody like the gentleman, I was doing my job and he did his damage. I said, “why would you do that? Why me ... I am a foreigner also and he also doesn’t know the language, he should help more than me. It would be better if a Greek would come and help”. So, when he comes in front of me, I’m constantly fighting. I do not leave them; I don’t give them the opportunity to speak.”

It is evident, therefore that sometimes it is other customers that are creating problems with their servicing that makes the transactions longer. Also, problems often stem from the lack of the necessary paperwork from the part of the immigrant customers. For example, Third Country Nationals that don’t have a residence permit have a problem using the Hellenic Post Services.

Despite the difficulties, however, the majority of the immigrant customers stated that they are serviced by the employees just as the Greeks: *“of course, of course, they treat me like Greek citizen”*. Other noted that their servicing varies very little.

There were some, though, that stated that their servicing is a little bit worse than the Greeks. For example, a woman immigrant said that everything is very difficult for her because she has two

kids and they don't help her when she has the kids with her. And another explained that any difference in behavior stems from fear:

“Basically, listen, the main problem is in this country because the Greek people [...] You know, the strange enough, in your country mostly the Greek people become scared from refugees. People are doing job in the governmental offices, we can't change their minds, yes?”

However, the general feeling was that they are almost always well treated and serviced, despite the difficulties; *“Every day that you come, you are serviced.”*. First of all, when problems occur, they are helped by the employees to solve them, even if it is not their fault:

“No, no, before, when I went just to receive that package from Turkey was delayed, and I went to ask, because I expected that, they were maybe bring it home, because I give them full details, number, everything, but I found out it was not their mistake, it was the mistake of the sender.”

Secondly, they feel very comfortable asking the employees to satisfy their needs. They say that if they ever want something more, they will come to the postal offices and ask it from the employees directly.

Also, they state that employees often go out of their way to service them, sometimes even if it is not their turn to be serviced:

“Because once I came here and I wanted to ask some information, I didn't have this ticket, the number ticket but I tried to make them understand I came here just for information and not coming to send something or to receive something. So, they gave me priority and they told what I need.”

They even compare the Hellenic Posts with the general public sector and they find their servicing much better. As one immigrant puts it:

“In the Greek services in general you need to speak the Greek to be able to be serviced. But in the Hellenic Posts, the employees speak English. [...] Everyone has got different personalities, but the Greek employees are good.”

And in the words of another immigrant customer interviewed:

“What I can add is I wish the employees of ELTA and in another post here in Greece to keep push, to keep take care of customers [...] So, it is ok, we are happy for the service. We thank the employees, we thank the manager, we thank everyone in the world.”

3.4.2.4 Informational sources and needs

When asked where and how they first found out about the Hellenic Posts, the answers of the participants varied a lot. Some did not remember at all. One stated that he found out himself.

Many asked Greeks in their jobs or neighborhoods or their Greek friends in general; *“from Greek people, yes. I didn’t ask from the Pakistani. Because they know better than the Pakistani or other guys”*.

Others said that other immigrants, from their home country or from another country as well, who have lived in Greece for a longer time, told them about the Hellenic Posts. Relatives also were a source of information, as well as Greek organizations for the integration of immigrants, such as Praxis.

When it comes to having difficulties getting informed about the Hellenic Posts and their services in general, they either think that there is none or that some people have problems, because they don't have information about the Greek products: *“Yes, yes, for most people it is difficult to find out where they shall pay the bills, where they shall pay the orders, government's money, that all the things are here.”*

So, the interviewers asked the participants in the study if they think that having leaflets of the Hellenic Posts translated in their language would be helpful and useful for them. Some thought that there is no need for that, and that their only need would be that the employees spoke the English language.

However, almost everyone agreed that it would be very useful and it would be easier for them to find out about the products and services of the Hellenic Post Offices. And one even took it one step further and suggested to translate the internet page of the Hellenic Posts in the Arabic or Pakistani language, or at least the English language:

“In internet yes, you can see that different languages, like Pakistani, will do, and Arabic, because mostly the people living here, they are refugee's Arabic or the Pakistani, and other people, they are doing jobs here. I don't know. But if you can do, do English.”

3.4.2.5 Need for cultural mediators

Finally, when the interviewers proposed that a cultural mediator was employed so as to help them with translating in their own language, almost everyone found it would be very useful and would make the communication process easier:

“Things would be easier then. Even if it is a Greek employee, it would be easier if he spoke his language. Because Farsi is spoken in Iran, as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan, so it doesn’t matter from which of these countries he comes from.”

One Third Country National even suggested that the cultural mediators don’t need to speak their language, but English or even French, because the employees themselves don’t: *“Yes, give them the translators, one translator in one Hellenic office. Yes, in English. But if you can have an available person of one hour it is good for you people.”* And as another interviewed customer put it:

“So, my own language the first problem, my mother language, is not international but French can be, ... It is ok in English because everyone has to understand. They make French, actually there is not many Greeks who speak French.”

However, some insisted that the most important need is that they can communicate with the employees directly: *“It is better that the employee knows my language because I can easily talk to him. And in Greek, I don't understand much. It would be better in my language.”*

3.4.3 In-depth interviews with representatives of institutions involved in the integration of Third Country Nationals

In the frame of this study, three in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of institutions promoting the integration of immigrants and particularly Third Country Nationals in the Greek society, so as to make comparisons with the services of the Hellenic Post offices and to learn more about their good practices.

The first interview was with a man representative from the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy, the second with a woman representative from the Council for Migrant Integration of the Municipality of Agios Dimitrios and the third with a woman representative from medical offices treating Third Country Nationals.

It was considered that it would be more helpful to analyze and present each interview individually, so as to follow better the different approaches.

3.4.3.1 Key points of the interview with the representative from a Polyclinic treating Third Country Nationals

First of all, when it comes to the immigrants that use the services of the polyclinic, they are mostly men, in the age group of 25-45, mostly unemployed, living in Athens. Regarding their ethnicity, *“well, they are [...] originating from Afghanistan, followed by Syria, Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh and then Africa.”* They are either single or if they are married, their wives still live in their country of origin.

The main difference between immigrants and Greek citizens is the language, as they don't speak Greek. Having a translator helps, but the process of translation often takes too long. However, there would be absolutely no way to be able to treat immigrant patients without the translators.

Also,

“at the communicational level, okay, there is a difficulty for them to grasp the social norms here, how things move at the bureaucratic level with the services. Well, integration is a dynamic and difficult and educational process that takes time; that is, logical and expected. They had other procedures in their country of origin.”

Moreover, they have different clothing and appearance. One other difference between immigrants and Greeks is that immigrant men don't let their gynecologists treat their wives.

The most important differentiation between Greeks and immigrants can be thought to be their different needs. While most Greeks make ends meet,

“housing is the basic demand of refugee people and it is perfectly understandable. Then comes the food, then the clothes, and then comes finding a job. [...] So, their needs, I would say, are more at the level of basic goods.”

It is thought that there is no difference between Greeks and immigrants in the sources of information they use. Both groups are mostly informed by word of mouth and via the internet as well. It is also very helpful in this process that all of their leaflets are translated in French, Arabic, Urdu and Farsi, the most frequently asked for languages.

Employment is considered by the interviewee as the most important step to integration. Therefore, programs could be created that would help recognize their acquired degrees and qualifications or to even educate them, teach them the Greek language and provide them with new skills, such as informatics.

Considering the implementation of a program of cultural mediators in the Hellenic Post Offices, the representative of the polyclinic would find it very useful, as

“intercultural mediators, in any case, wherever such populations are highly concentrated, as you said, are necessary, for me. [...] because even in a very specific process, issues can arise that need to be discussed more and explained and answered appropriately”.

The required characteristics of a cultural mediator are also described. According to her, therefore, a cultural mediator has to be a perfectly defined person, he must not identify with anyone, hold an objective and calm attitude. He should be able to cooperate, be cooperative, he should be able to descale situations if needed. He should create a sense of security and confidence.

At the level of the languages he should speak, the most common languages are Farsi, then Arabic, then Urdu, and some French.

What could be taught, in addition to the languages, could be a more general education to the people who are servicing refugees, on the subject of xenophobia and racism. *“That is, it is more of a social issue than a procedural one. Because just as they service a Greek, they service a non-Greek”.*

3.4.3.2 Key points of the interview with the representative from the Council for Migrant Integration

The interview with the representative from the Council for Migrant Integration of Agios Dimitrios started with a quick overview of the institution. The Councils for Migrant Integration were created in 2011. They are advisory municipality bodies.

It was estimated that in the Municipality of Agios Dimitrios lived 6.000 immigrants, Third Country Nationals, in a total of 70.000-100.000 citizens. This Council for Migrant Integration was the only one in the country that its members were voted in 2011. *“We put ballots in and the immigrants voted. Some people from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan were voting for the first time in their lives.”* Three representatives from Pakistan were elected, one from Albania and one from Syria.

Unfortunately, due to the refugee crisis, most immigrants left the Municipality and in 2014 the institution was unable to go through an election process and therefore appointed the representatives of the ethnicities.

Among the actions the Council took were Greek language courses, financed by a European program at first and now operating in a voluntary scheme, with more than 200 immigrants enrolled in them each year.

Also, they are doing a lot of raising awareness actions, as well as kitchen and meal servicing actions. Furthermore, their action that they believe is going to help the most in the integration process is the small business courses.

They also tried to create shelters. In this action, it was indispensable that they involved a cultural mediator, to be able to communicate. And they also distribute social housing. The Council has sometimes received threats because of its services and work, but the policy is that they would never back up from an action because of these threats and that they would always carry out their work.

The migrants being aided by the Council all from all ethnicities that live in the country. They are both men and women, but mostly men, in the ages of 20-50 and are mostly employed. The representative believes that they have no differentiation to the Greek citizens, with regard to their profile in social services and aid.

What they mostly seek aid for is health services, because the Council is cooperating with the Municipalities health clinic, as well as aid with official document and paperwork problems; *“this is their constant anxiety”*.

It is often very difficult to communicate with immigrants, due to the language barrier. In these cases, the body language is used. When everything else fails, Third Country Nationals bring along someone who knows both languages, in order to translate for them.

When it comes to informational sources, there is a differentiation between immigrants and refugees. While immigrants are mostly seeking information from official sources, such as the Municipality and Citizen Service Centers,

“Refugees have a very big network, they are informing one another, and very much over the internet, too. They are very well informed. They all have a smartphone, they know everything. This has been differentiated.”

When the Council wants to inform immigrants about a new project or generally diffuse information, although social media are used as well, the most successful and easiest method is by word of mouth. As long as they inform one immigrant, he/she will inform all of the other immigrants of his community.

The Council members also visit places they frequent, such as unofficial mosques and public services offices, where they inform them. Moreover, when they put up posters or distribute flyers, they translate them in the most common languages as well, such as Urdu and Arabic.

According to the interviewee, it would be very helpful to appoint a cultural mediator to the Hellenic Post Offices with the most Third Country National clients, as the language problem is very important for them and *“they can’t understand everything”*.

3.4.3.3 Key points of the interview with the representative from the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy

The Ministry for Migration Policy was, according to its representative who participated in the study, created in 2016, but started fully operating in 2017. It is comprised of a General Secretariat and three other departments; the welcoming and identification department; the asylum department; and the immigrant’s authority department that also treats asylum demands in Athens.

The Ministry records all refugees in Greece and provides services in most of the country. The regions of Attica and Thessaloniki have the most services, as it has most refugees, followed by Macedonia and Central Greece and then Peloponnesus. The Ministry does not have services in Thrace, Crete and the Ionian islands.

All refugees in Greece are Third Country Nationals. When it comes to their demographics, they are very much differentiated. Refugees from Syria and Middle East are mostly comprised of families, whereas Pakistan and Afghanistan refugees are mostly single male. African refugees are divided; there both single males and single females, notably from Cameroun, Nigeria and Central Africa.

Single men are financial restrained, but refugees from the Middle East are on a much better financial situation. This was found out because in the welcoming centers they were obliged to give their money for safekeeping and at times they had large amounts of money with them.

Behavior towards social services is very much differentiated according to the ethnicity of the refugees.

“From the states where there was a relatively developed, regime like, let’s say, Syria, people seem to be familiar with ‘waiting in line’ procedures so as to make a request. In states now, such as Afghanistan, which are obviously experiencing abnormal conditions, well, the situation is more fluid, so to speak, and this is reflected in the behavior of people, who are more demanding, there is a difficulty in accepting some rules; not that it is prohibitive, but more effort is needed. Even worse is probably [the situation] with people from some African states.”

Also, the educational level and knowledge of foreign languages is higher in refugees from Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Whereas, in Afghanistan, for example, one might not even know their own language, having been raised in another foreign country such as Iran or Turkey.

So, the Greek State has to take over, alongside with Non-Governmental Organizations, so as to achieve at least a minimum level of communication. The most important action of the Ministry, is that it has employed, with financing from the European Union, translators which are also cultural mediators, especially in the welcoming and identification centers.

The most important informational source of refugees are the traffickers, who, however, spread rumors as well as real information. They are mostly misinformed with regards to their rights in the European Union and that is the reason they have such high hopes. But misinformation is also spread about services, events and news:

“It was only recently through mobile messaging and postings on websites, that [they said] “the borders have opened” and “go to the railway stations to go to the northern border of Greece and leave for the European Union”, which, of course, was completely wrong. And there were rallies at Larissa Station and Diavata.”

Therefore, the Ministry’s aim is mainly to inform refugees of their rights and obligations, as well as life in the refugee camps. The Ministry has also created various informative leaflets. However, many that know English or French are very well informed through the internet.

So, according to the representative of the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy, it would be very useful if the Hellenic Post was to adopt some of the Ministry’s actions, such as employing cultural mediators or creating informational leaflets.

But even more so, if the Hellenic Posts were to create educational programs for its employees so as to provide them with the necessary tools in order to better service Third Country Nationals. The representative goes on to remark that this would also improve the services of the state services in general, not just for refugees and immigrants.

In general, I think that the migrant-refugee crisis opportunities is a good opportunity for us, both as a society and as a state, to see ourselves in an effort to, say, self-improve; that is, some services that can be better provided for all, for Greek citizens and Third Country Nationals. [...]

[...] And this, I think -because social relations are obviously based on interaction and influence of one another- will also have a positive effect on Greek societies, which in turn can be improved as well; and in general, to be created a creative circle, so to speak, through thus improving relationships.

3.4.4 In-depth interviews from Romania

3.4.4.1 The structure of the population of respondents

The interview was attended by 9 men and a woman, between the ages of 26-45 years old. Regarding the countries of origin of the interview participants, we mention:

1. Libya
2. Turkey
3. Palestina
4. Italy
6. Syria
7. Pakistan

All interview participants have at least a bachelor's degree and come from a good social and economic background.

Most of the interview participants consider that there are no characteristics that differentiate them from the Romanian clients and the postal services are offered equally regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

The main products and services used by the interview participants are email correspondence and retail products.

Of the interviewees, most speak Romanian so they did not encounter difficulties in communicating with the employees of the Romanian post. In the general case, all participants in the interview consider that there are cultural and linguistic barriers generated largely by the fact that not all employees of the post speak a foreign language, in particular English.

In the opinion of the interview participants, there is not enough information regarding the services and products offered by the post, both for the Romanian clients and even more for the foreign clients.

Among the suggestions offered by the interviewees we mention an English brochure presenting the services and products offered by the post and especially updating the information on the site and translating this information into English.

The most important conclusion of the interviews is that training programs are needed for the employees of the post to help improve the services and facilitate the interaction with the clients. Most of the interview participants consider that special programs should be directed to the employees of the post and not necessarily to the third country nationals, since in the latter case it would be very difficult to realize such programs because of their specificity.

3.5 Qualitative research: Focus group interviews

3.5.1 Focus groups with employees of the Hellenic Post

3.5.1.1 Profile of the participants

In the context of this research program three focus groups with employees of the Hellenic Post Offices took place, in order to record their views and experience about servicing Third Country Nationals in the postal offices, as well as their recommendations for the improvement of the postal services in this domain.

The focus groups took place in the offices of the Hellenic Post in 02/04/2019, 19/04/2019 and 09/05/2019.

In the first focus group participated seven employees, all women, most of them working in the Strategic Development and Management Division, which is engaged in a project concerning Third Country Nationals.

The first employee works in the International Relations' Division and although she doesn't have personal experience from servicing immigrants, she is responsible for the communication with Third Countries' post offices.

The second employee is currently working in the Strategic Development and Management Division. However, she has worked for a number of years as a frontline officer and has had experience with servicing Third Country Nationals.

The third participant is also working in working in the Strategic Development and Management Division, but has never serviced immigrants. The fourth woman in the group is working in the same division, in the regulatory department. In the past she has serviced foreign, non-European citizens, but not Third Country Nationals.

The fifth participant is in the International Relations' Division. She has serviced Third Country Nationals, particularly from the Philippines, in the Syntagma branch (central Athens), although it was 26 years ago. She believes, however, that the problems of frontline officers in this sector have not differentiated a lot.

The sixth participant has worked for two in two branches in Central Athens as a frontline officer where she serviced Third Country Nationals daily. In the one of the two, particularly, she was appointed in the parcels' section which had the most concentration of immigrant customers.

Finally, the last participant is working in the Human Resources Division and has worked for four years in a central Athens branch where she serviced Third Country Nationals as well.

In the second focus group participated ten employees of the Hellenic Post, all women. The first employee is 54 years old and is the Manager of the Peristeri branch of the Hellenic Post. She has previously worked as a frontline officer.

The second employee works as a frontline officer in the Hellenic Posts for 5 years now and the last two years she works in the Peristeri branch. The third employee is a cashier in the Peristeri branch and has worked in the company for 24 years.

The fourth participant of the focus group currently works in the Human Resources' Division, but has previously worked for 24 years as a frontline officer. The fifth participant is 41 years also, has worked since 2002 as a frontline officer, but from 2015 she became the Manager in her branch.

The sixth participant is working in the Strategic Development and Management Division. When it comes to Third Country Nationals, she has never been a frontline officer in general, but she has worked on the project of the Division concerning these customers.

The next participant is 52 years old and has worked for 30 years as a frontline officer in the Hellenic Post Offices, where she had experience in servicing Third Country Nationals. She is soon going to be a member of the Strategic Development and Management Division.

The eighth participant has worked in the Hellenic Post for 16 years, in various branches, such as Anthoupolis, Kipoupolis, Mitropolis, Peristeri, NeaSepolia. The ninth employee in the focus group has been working in the Hellenic Posts for 22 years, in many branches, ranging from Kamatero and Menidi, to Peristeri. She is currently working in the NeaSepolia branch.

Finally, the last participant of the second focus group has been working in the Hellenic Post Offices, in the delivery division, for 10 years. She is currently working in the NeaSepolia branch as well.

Finally, in the third focus group participated five employees of the Hellenic Post, all women, as well. The first participant has been working in the Hellenic Post offices for 34 years. She has been working in the Koumoundourou branch as a frontline officer since 2002, where 90% of the customers are immigrants.

The second participant of the focus group has been working in the company for 38 years and the last 3 she was transferred in the central branch. She believes that it is the branch where she will end her career, though with much anxiety and pressure.

The third employee that participated in the focus group has been working in the Hellenic Post Offices for 35 years, both in downtown Athens, such as the Omonia branch, which serviced a big proportion of the immigrant population, and in the provinces, in big and in small branches.

The fourth employee has been working in the company for 10 years. She started her career in the Mitropoleos branch, where there were a lot of foreigner customers, though mostly tourist, but then she was transferred to the Kato Patisia branch.

Finally, the fifth participant of the third focus group with employees of the Hellenic Post Offices has worked in the company for 22 years. She started her career in the Kipseli branch and she is currently working in the central branch of Patisia. She has only worked as a frontline officer for 5 years and was mostly occupied with the Western Union service.

3.5.1.2 Ethnicities of Third Country Nationals using the Hellenic Post services

A great number of Third Country Nationals -as well as European migrants, especially from the Balkan region, such as Albanians, Romanians and Bulgarians- uses the Hellenic Post offices, according to the employees that participated in the focus groups.

The ethnicities that are mostly represented are Middle-Eastern ones, such as, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran. They are also from Asian countries, such as China, Philippines, but mostly Pakistan and India. Lastly, some immigrant customers come from African countries, such as Morocco, Uganda, Nigeria and Somalia.

When it comes to the concentration of immigrants in the branches of the Hellenic Posts, it is estimated by the employees participating in the focus groups that 16 out of the 111 branches in Athens receive large volumes of immigrants. Also, four regional branches in the islands of Mitilini, Samos and Chios receive significant volumes of immigrant customers.

In downtown Athens most customers are immigrants, including tourists as well. However, immigrants, unlike tourists, are frequent customers. But in the suburbs of Athens, as well, 10% of the daily customers are Third Country Nationals.

3.5.1.3 Services of the Hellenic Post Offices and their use by Third Country Nationals

The focus groups started with describing what kind of products and services the Hellenic Post offers. There were no major differences between the three focus groups in that regard. As one of the employees put it:

“We have parcels abroad that they can send and receive, of course. Letter, our first and foremost product, so either it can be shipped overseas or the express, we say, express. Well, we said letter, parcel and financial products, which we say, which includes western union instruments, mainly that is where I focus more.”

In essence, they all agreed that in the Hellenic Posts one can send and receive simple or recommended letters within the country and abroad, send and receive parcels within the country and abroad.

They also mentioned the financial products, which include a saving banks, the service of payment of bills of both public and private companies, the service of checks within the country or abroad, Money Home, with which one can send checks to prisons, Eurogiro, Money Express, as well as Western Union, a service through which one can send and receive money abroad.

Lastly, the Hellenic Post offices have their own gift shop, as well as its own philatelic products.

When it comes to which of these services are mostly used by Third Country Nationals Customers, again the answers were similar. Immigrants mostly use the Western Union service to send and receive money abroad: *“A large demand for Western Union, I think it's a magnet. Everyone or most of them were asking for Western Union.”*

Also, the Money Home service to send checks to imprisoned friends and family members is very popular. They also send and receive parcels, as well as letters, which they often use to send passports to friends and relatives.

Many immigrants use the Postal Offices to pay their bills, renew their mobile phone cards and to receive allowances, their pensions and their social insurance checks as well.

They use therefore most of the Hellenic Post's services. What they almost never buy, however, is philatelic products and gifts:

“They never come to buy any of our products -at least it has never happened in our shop- the philatelic ones, etc. They are only to receive their recommended letter or send Western Union. The parcels, the recommended letters, etc. They have nothing else, let's say.”

Also, depending on the ethnicity of the customer, there is a difference in the services they tend to mostly use. As one employee said, referring to the financial products,

“you will very rarely find [people] from Pakistan or Syria [asking for these services]. You can find from Albania; you can find from Poland. I don't know why. While from other countries, from what I have seen, from Syria, Pakistan etc., they are only [asking] for parcels.”

On the other side, Greek customers send a lot of letters. Rarely do they send parcels and when they do, they are smaller ones. They also buy a lot of the philatelic products of the Hellenic Post, which as mentioned above, immigrants don't usually buy.

When it comes to financial products, they use the Hellenic Posts to send simple and express checks, they use Eurogiro, payment of bills and taxes and fast payments, as well as the savings accounts. They rarely use the Western Union and Money Home services.

3.5.1.4 Communication problems

According to the employees that participated in the focus groups, the Hellenic Post Offices have a long history of servicing migrants and Third Country Nationals.

But, whereas in the past most spoke either English or French and so the communication among customers and employees was pretty much easily achieved, the recent refugee crisis along with the major surge of the number of Third Country Nationals arriving in Greece, most of whom don't speak any foreign language, has created new communicational problems. It is mostly, therefore, Syrians and Afghans that have big communicational problems.

Basically, the most important inhibitor of the transactions and the communication overall is the fact that often immigrants don't speak the English language at all or they speak and understand it poorly.

But the problems are not only stemming from the part of the immigrant customers, but from the employees as well. It is often the case that the frontline officers don't speak the English or the French language, or that they don't know how to translate the terms and specialized words in English.

“Once I was trying to communicate someone who did not even know English. He had brought someone with him, a third person, of his own ethnicity. He was from Pakistan. We were trying to communicate, with the English that I know, the English that his friend knew. He didn't understand the language at all. We were trying to communicate among three people. That's where we have the problem.”

But the communicational problems are not confined in the spoken language only; they are also expanding in the written language. As all the forms that need to be filled are in Greek, the employees suggested that they be translated in English at least. For example, when the forms say “name” in Greek, the immigrants can't understand what they are supposed to write in that blank.

“Okay, let's say, when I had to write checks, they couldn't write, they didn't know how to write, some were illiterate because they came from Nigeria, Somalia and those countries. Or they didn't know how to write, they barely knew their name or they didn't know the Latin alphabet, so there was a problem. They could say a few words, they knew how to ask [for something], but then the check must be written and they must give the correct details of the recipient...”

There are Greek illiterates also, but the difference is that since they can speak the Greek language, they can communicate and write, the employees that is, themselves the required information. This is unfortunately not the case when it comes to many Third Country Nationals customers.

But it is always easier to communicate with immigrants such as Nigerians, for example, who speak French. If the employee however does not speak the French language, the problem persists.

Sometimes, when the communication is difficult and employees can't understand what the immigrant customers are telling them, the last get frustrated or even angry, especially when an error is made and their transaction is not completed properly:

“If the communication is a little problematic and we do not understand the destination or whatever in the check, which goes to jails, it often returns often and then we often have to argue. The least of all is to be called names. Many times, I'm afraid that something might happen.”

Moreover, Third Country Nationals often don't have the necessary paperwork to complete a transaction, such as passport and residence permit, which creates problems and prolongs the transaction process.

“The thing about those who are from third countries and especially Syrians, Pakistans, is that most of them have no documents. And there is the difficulty in

servicing them. Or, let's say, someone comes to pick up a recommended letter that has official documents inside. How would you give it to him? That's where the issue is; when a document is missing. If it's okay and he has his passports, we'll find a way, we'll talk to him, he'll do the job."

Furthermore, employees themselves have not received clear directions of which are the necessary documents for each ethnicity being serviced. For example, which are the war zones, where the letters and parcels have long delays. And, generally, they don't have guidance in the field of paperwork regarding Third Country Nationals.

Also, immigrants are often not informed about the permitted objects one can put in a parcel send abroad. So, they often put in prohibited or dangerous products, such as batteries, which are then said back to the sender. Then they ask for their money back, but it is not the company's policy to reimburse them in such cases. Therefore, it falls on the shoulders of the employees to explain them that they cannot get their money back, often receiving their frustration.

"[...] a gentleman had come, he was from Pakistan, and he had sent to a homogenous person in Germany a recommended letter. So, he came accompanied by another immigrant to understand [what happened].

We were about an hour or a half an hour or forty minutes outside, I had gone out to the room so we could talk, because he was telling me his letter didn't arrive. So, I ask his companion the barcode, I go in, I see it was in Germany. And we were trying now to communicate among three people, because not even the other [the companion] spoke English very well. And finally, what was it? The letter was there, but his own man [the recipient] had not gone to ask for it with the barcode. He just went and asked for a letter. And he was told "we don't have one ".

3.5.1.5 Coping mechanisms

First of all, it is very important that Third Country Nationals usually are very kind, more so than Greeks. They are waiting, they are patient, they are scared. They have more tolerance when being serviced.

Having gone through much worse, they won't lose their temper for waiting in line. However, it is noted that *“most of them are already panicked when they come because they don't know what they will face and how they will communicate.”*

When they do get angry, however, *“they, of course, may be more visible, because they cannot communicate with us. And they are angry, they have gone through difficult situations.”*

Now, regarding communication when both the customer and the employee know the English language -which in the end is not so rare- they can communicate orally. But more often than not, it is signs that are the basic source of communication.

Because many Third Country Nationals are frequent customers, once they familiarize with the processes and they have learned what and how to use the services, there was no need to even speak. They communicate with signs, they come, they leave the parcels and they leave. Sometimes, when they have found a communication code with a certain employee, they ask to only be serviced by that specific employee.

Sometimes, when they could not communicate at all, immigrants brought their children, who knew the Greek language and used them as translators, so as to complete the transactions easily.

Often, they come accompanied by other immigrants, usually of their own ethnicity that speak English or have lived in Greece for a long time and speak Greek, so as to help them in their transactions by translating or even completing the transactions.

There are also some representatives in the communities that bring the necessary paperwork already filled in, so as to save time. They are helping each other, especially in the migrant communities. One migrant may send parcels for himself and others people of his community at the same time.

When employees have problem communicating, they ask for help from their colleagues or their Manager, that know the English language.

“Let’s say, I may not be able to speak English well, because I don’t know it. The boss will come and I will tell her, “Come on over, help me, because I’m stuck right now.” They will come. Or the colleague next door will come”.

More often than not, even if it is prohibited by the company, employees fill in the forms themselves:

“Even if you show [in the form], they look at you; they don’t understand anything, it makes sense. We have no communication. And even if I tell them, here’s the surname, in English, they don’t understand me. So, you take the pen and write the check, in essence.”

However, they do that with the fear of mistakes, because even so much as one letter is wrong, the letter or parcel or money might never arrive in the destination. And then, the employees are often afraid what the immigrant’s response might be:

“Yes, because if one letter is wrong, I’m just saying, if he’s crazy or I don’t know what connections he has, he sent it to a prison. How do I know if he’ll be waiting for me outside in the afternoon or whatever? That has of course not happened to me often, because we do not have as much burden as you, who are in the center of Athens.”

The employees argue that they should not have to deal with such kind of incidents; they simply want to be able to work calmly, they don’t want special treatment. It is noted, however, that it is not the immigrants’ fault, but the kind of work that they do is that entails such hazards.

When the frontline officers have to give money and they don’t have clear guidance from the Hellenic Post, they have to decide themselves if they are going to give it or not to the customers.

Some employees have tried using translation apps in their phones to communicate more easily. However, it has not so far worked out, as it takes more time than without them and the transactions are prolonged even more.

Also, some immigrants that can communicate very well with the employees have offered to be on call so as to help the employees communicate with other immigrant customers and make the needed translations.

Or if the employee sees a frequent customer waiting, that knows the language of the immigrant they are trying to service but don't understand, they call them to come and help.

In the end, even in the most difficult of cases, there are very few exceptions that an immigrant will not succeed in completing a transaction. Both employees and customers do whatever it takes and use all means available to communicate and use the services of the Hellenic Post: *“Yes, it is always found [the way to communicate]. He might say one thing, we might do a little bit another thing, we will find something to...”*. In other words:

“You are trying. There was a man who came, he didn't know neither English nor ... And he made me sent a message to someone else who was in Turkey. And I sent him a message about what he had to do to get the money from Western Union.”

It was also mentioned that in the past, Athens Municipality created focal points which informed newly arrived immigrants about the state services. Also, Western Union had created informational leaflets about its products translated in other languages.

3.5.1.6 Work fatigue

One interesting pattern that was obvious in all three focus groups was that the Hellenic Post personnel felt nearly burned out, due to the stress and pressure of the work, in a great part having to do with dealing on a daily with difficult cases, such trying to communicating with a person with whom they have no common ground, no common language, in other words with Third Country Nationals.

Sometimes, when they are trying too hard to communicate with someone who doesn't know even English, and the time passes, and the other customers waiting in line start getting impatient and frustrated, the employees might get frustrated as well, which doesn't help the completion of a transaction.

The fact that a big proportion of the Hellenic Post offices employees is of an older age having worked in the Hellenic Posts and nearing their retirement, doesn't help either with the phenomenon of work fatigue in the company, which in turns makes even more difficult for the employees to be able to perform their best in such difficult cases.

3.5.1.7 Immigrants' perceived satisfaction from the Hellenic Posts

The very fact that they keep coming to the Hellenic Post offices, again and again, and they are showing confidence to the employees to handle their affairs, is the most significant proof that Third Country Nationals are satisfied from the servicing they receive in the postal offices from the employees, that they are satisfied from the environment and that their needs are covered by the company.

Also, as mentioned before, they always manage to get serviced. When immigrants feel that the employee is really interested in their problems, they feel generous and satisfied and give it back. The employees often hear expressions of gratitude.

“It brings out a different culture and familiarity because even the ones with one employee will have a boss inside or a distributor [...] and they will see a lot of

people behind the offices. It's not like private company that has an employee simply delivering a courier item. There is continuous connection and through the forms as well, more generally...”

“ because their issues are survival ones here, to manage to stay, to have their papers, even if one offers them a small degree, the minimum service, they will think that they have been serviced perfectly.”

3.5.1.8 Suggestions for better servicing and informing Third Country Nationals

Throughout the three focus groups it was made evident that the Hellenic Posts needed to take action and improve and facilitate its services, as well as improve its promotional tools, regarding its Third Country Nationals customers.

First and foremost, the Hellenic Posts could utilize more the existing personnel who know foreign languages. They could also invite NGOs to educate and train their employees in the most prominent languages and in their culture and history.

But the seminars should not be reduced to just learning a language or culture; they employees could be taught of better communication methods, how to deal with angry and impatient customers, how to treat extremely difficult cases and how to use psychology to achieve a communication.

However, as it is very difficult to train all its personnel, the use of cultural mediators could be of help. Although some employees were reluctant to this, because the personnel of the Hellenic Posts are not enough, they all agreed that if they were paid by NGOs, then they could really be of help.

But the cultural mediators should be in the camps as well, to help them in advance. And maybe they could be coming to the postal offices on their behalf.

A call center within the Hellenic Post could also be introduced, which any employee could call and ask for help in servicing an immigrant, either for information about the legal parameters and the regulations of the company or by even using a translator to communicate.

Also, technology could be used, with translation apps that would be used both by the employees and by the immigrant customers. Lastly, they could distribute in the branches pre-filled forms, as well as instruction leaflets, so as to make the processes easier.

When it comes to promotion of the Hellenic Posts, a leaflet in the English language could be made and distributed to the immigrant communities. Because in these communities, more often than not, the leaders know the English language well. Also, the Hellenic Posts could translate these leaflets in the most used languages, such as Pakistan's languages and Arabic.

Another suggestion would be to translate the internet site in other languages, or to create posters in other languages; posters that could be put up in their neighborhoods and communities.

Finally, the Hellenic Post could even create an intern platform, a messaging app, where immigrants could ask their questions in their language and have an official answer, so as to be prepared when they come to the postal offices to complete a transaction.

3.5.2 Focus groups with prospective employees of the Hellenic Post

3.5.2.1 Profile of the participants

On 02/07/2019, a focus group with prospective employees of the Hellenic Post took place in the premises of the National Centre for Social Research of Greece, in the address Kratinou 9 and Athinas, in the 8th floor.

In the focus group participated 7 prospective employees. The discussion between them was very rich, as they were even engaging in dialogues and making comments to each other's statements.

Now, the first participant is a man, who is a sociologist and a freelancer in the field of lifelong learning. He lives both in the island of Evia, in the Municipality of Eretria, as well as in Athens, in the Municipality of Kallithea.

The second participant is a 26-year-old woman, graduate in political studies and currently preparing to start her Masters in political studies. She lives in a suburban area of Athens called Menidi.

The third participant is also a woman and a graduate of political studies. The fourth prospective employee is a woman as well, an undergraduate in economics and regional development, currently employed in the private sector, in a tutoring school.

The fifth participant in the focus group is a man, also an undergraduate in economics and regional development. Now, the sixth participant is a male, 37 years old, unemployed and completing a Masters in Management of Cultural Units.

Finally, the last participant is a man, holding two Bachelor's degrees, one in electronics and one in technological education, as well as a Master's degree in computer science, currently working as a technician in Samsung's service department. He lives in the south suburbs of Athens and comes from Santorini. He has previously worked for the Hellenic Post, in the distribution center of Kryoneri.

3.5.2.2 Immigrants' Satisfaction from the Hellenic Post services

So, how do these prospective employees of the Hellenic Post describe the immigrants who come at the post offices as customers? They give descriptions regarding their demographics, as well as their interactions with the frontline officers of the Hellenic Posts offices.

So, they are mostly men, as only a small portion of them are women. A difference in behavior is noted, as men seem to be more impatient and demanding than the few women that seek the services of the Hellenic Posts. They also are in the age groups between 25 and 50 and seem to be employed, based on the type of services they seek.

They mostly refer, though, to their origin and they think that there is a differentiation depending on the geographical area; whether, that is, one visits a post office in downtown Athens, in the suburbs of Athens or the province.

In the provinces, for example, *“35% - 40% of the population are Third Country Nationals, coming from India, Pakistan, etc., because they help with the rural jobs”*. In the suburbs of Athens, they mostly meet people from the former Soviet Union, from Pakistan and India.

In downtown Athens, now, most Third Country Nationals clients of the Hellenic Post seem to be coming either from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and India, or African countries, such as Congo.

One reason why the origin of Third Country Nationals plays a role in their interactions with frontline officers, apart from the language problems, is linked for the prospective employees of the Hellenic Post with the difference in culture; a difference between officers and immigrants and between different groups of immigrants:

“Nationality plays a very important role, because it has a lot to do with the profile of the immigrant, third-country national and in general, with his culture, customs, the way he behaves. And in general, the workforce [in the Hellenic Post offices] is mostly women. We know that some nationalities see women as inferior [to men].”

One view shared by most of the participants in the focus group was that one big problem stems from the concentration of most immigrants seeking the services of the Hellenic Post in the central Athens region and even more specifically in three or four branches, while other regions of Athens or the rural area have significantly less immigrant customers.

One can note that this is due to the fact that the hot spots for asylum seekers, as well as the neighborhoods where a great proportion of immigrants leave, are near or in Central Athens, *“and they have learned that they can be serviced there [in these Hellenic Post branches]. They have learned it by word of mouth. Where did you go; There. I’ll go there too.”*

If one adds to that the fact that in downtown Athens the number of Greek and tourist population seeking service from the Hellenic Post is also bigger, the problem seems even greater:

“The truth is that the volume of work and the character of work also varies with the region, as populations change. The truth is that the burden falls mainly on some areas in downtown Athens, where the population that frontline officers have to serve is extremely large.”

Therefore, longer queues put more pressure and anxiety to both frontline officers and Third Country Nationals.

The problem that arises in these areas, therefore, is that with the recent flows of refugees there is a bigger communication issue. One of the biggest problems, is the communication difficulties due to the language barrier. Third Country Nationals often have difficulty both communicating with frontline officers and with understanding the steps, procedures and necessary documentation required to be able to be serviced in the Hellenic Posts.

One other factor that contributes to the communication gap, is how many years an immigrant has leaved in Greece. It is generally noticed that the more years one has stayed in the country, the easier it is for them to communicate with officers, without it being a general rule however, as language should not be seen as the only obstacle in the communication process.

That being said, even in the cases of immigrants who have learned the Greek or English language, one problem still remains: the insecurity and the lack of procedure knowledge. Only if they have already used a service and they know from prior experience which are, for example,

the necessary documents to bring, do they seem calmer - but still anxious to be serviced without any problems:

“I see an insecurity of “do I know everything I need to do to get my job done? Will they ask me for something else?” [...] They [...] ask what they should do. That is, they find it difficult to understand even this part, it is not always just a language issue.”

One of the major issues touched in the focus group was the satisfaction of immigrants from the services and the servicing of their needs overall from the Hellenic Post officers. It is noted that there is a differentiation based on the ethnicity of the immigrants.

For example, some Third Country Nationals who have gone through extreme hardships in their countries of origin, understand that the problems they face in a post office branch are not so important and are therefore much more patient.

Also, the very region of a country that they come from can play a role, as there are wealthier and poorer regions. An immigrant coming from a wealthy region and is well educated can be more demanding, as the poorer, less educated immigrant often feels insecure and that they cannot understand everything works.

Some participants also noted that dissatisfaction from the public sector is a general phenomenon among Greeks and therefore immigrants tend to imitate them:

“But, in essence, “we see what the Greeks are doing and we are doing the same”. That is, since the Greeks believe that the public sector does not have good services, what will they learn? When native residents, who have easier access to information and communication, behave in a certain way and have a certain perception, sometimes it affects them [immigrants].”

Moreover, frontline officers often seem to have not acquired the necessary skills so that they can service Third Country Nationals. It was also mentioned that there is a lack of personnel as well, which leads to greater waiting hours for all customers, although one participant noticed that in the branches that receive the most load of work, there has been a recruitment of more people, in order to help service the increased number of customers.

If one adds to that the work-related fatigue which comes as a result of having a more senior personnel, as in most branches there have not been a lot of recent recruitments, frontline officers can really be pressured by servicing an immigrant who has difficulty communicating in Greek.

Some officers are even nearly burned out due to this pressure. Prospective employees noted that measures such as work rotation and encouragement do not seem to have been put into effect.

Senior employees, in particular, are thought to be in more need of encouragement when they are asked to perform a new task, because *“when suddenly something comes up that they have not done before, usually older people in all jobs say, “I don't know that, I give up”.*” If they are shown, however, that their fears are unfounded, that their age does not actually inhibit them and they are encouraged, then they can perform a lot better.

However, despite all these difficulties, employees and immigrants alike combine their efforts to find a common ground of communication. Because the services of the Hellenic Posts used by Third Country Nationals are of vital importance to Third Country Nationals, as they are linked to sending and receiving money, they try even harder to achieve the necessary communication and therefore be serviced.

For example, some immigrants go to the post offices accompanied by other immigrants, usually of the same ethnicity, that know the Greek or English language and the procedures, so as to get their job down much quicker. Or, experienced immigrants take up this role of a cultural mediator on their own, undertaking other immigrants’ cases.

But for the most part, it is left between frontline officers and immigrants with little or no knowledge of either Greek or English to communicate through gestures and body language. Some employees even use their phone translation apps. Communication seems to almost always be achieved, although it is an exhausting and long process for both parties involved.

When one participant in the focus group asked an employee of the Hellenic Post how they manage to communicate with Third Country Nationals that do not know the Greek or English language, he answered:

"We will find a way. We will find a way. We will talk like this, we will make some nods. Body language works great in this sector. A solution will be found. I will ask a colleague, I will ask someone else who is with them, the process will take a little while, but a solution will be found. Or I'll tell him to come in later. "

In the end, however, it was a general agreement among the prospective employees that immigrants themselves seem to feel that their needs are met, despite all the problems and the lack of skills from the part of Hellenic Post Officers. Thanks to the efforts of Third Country Nationals as well as frontline officers, they are almost always serviced, even if that takes more time than usual.

3.5.2.3 Suggestions to improve the services of the Hellenic Posts to Third Country Nationals

All of the prospective employees of the Hellenic Post that participated in the focus group had several suggestions to make regarding the improvement of the quality of the services offered to Third Country Nationals in the Hellenic Post offices. These included educational and informational, as well as other kind of initiatives.

One good idea would be, first and foremost, to ask from other countries facing the same problems as Greece in their post offices, that already have the know-how, for advice and good practices.

On the educational level, now, it was deemed important that all frontline officers have a sufficient knowledge of the English language. As many employees have little or no knowledge of English, the communication progress becomes more difficult. Therefore, if they were taught the English language, it would be of great help for them.

However, as in most cases immigrants do not speak or understand the English language, just learning the English language would still be insufficient: *“Even if they learn English, there are many immigrants who do not know English. So, we will teach English to the employees and still there will be a great gap.”*

So, it was proposed that officers learn the basic terminology used in most of the daily transactions in the postal offices in the most frequent languages used by Third Country Nationals.

And even more, since signals and body language are already used by many officers, it would be very helpful if it was taught to all employees; *“How can we use body language to communicate more easily? This is something not everyone knows. We don't know either. But there are experts who know this.”*

One other important area of education of the employees would be conflict resolution. As tension can very easily be built between both sides, because:

“the immigrant customer gets upset -he has his own problems as well- and starts complaining. [...] and maybe the other customers get involved. Then the whole branch gets involved. Maybe the employee themselves get upset. It's logical, they are people as well. They are there since the early morning [they are tired] and a difficult case comes along and they can't cope.”

It would be very important, therefore, if frontline officers were taught how to handle these cases, how to calm down customers that can't understand their language so that they and the next customers can complete their transactions. There are many approaches and steps towards this resolution, such as win-win, escape, situation management. Also, stress and time management would be of great help as from what the participants have observed *“there a stress issue, a time issue”* during these kinds of transactions.

One of the most important areas where Hellenic Posts should focus their educational seminars for their employees should be, according to these prospective employees, education on their cultures. *“It would be very helpful for employees to know some of the basic characteristics of*

religion, culture, morals and customs of the key population groups they service, because it plays a very important role.” For example, a gesture they make might be offensive for Greeks and vice-versa, and this can ruin the whole communication progress.

Although this kind of education might seem unnecessary, it can be a very important job tool to be able to understand the behavior of each immigrant group:

“It will help the employee along the way to save time, to be able to become more effective, to resolve issues before they even occur, to de-escalate tensions, manage conflicts and crises. To be able to feel that they can respond to the request of the person who asks to be serviced.”

One initiative that would be very helpful in the communication progress would be to install machines and apps in tablets or mobile phones with a translation software, that would be used both by the customer and by the employee as well.

Or, even further, to install machines which one would use in their own language and complete a transaction, *“like in the subway, I’ve seen machines that you can buy tickets from. When you buy your ticket, they may offer you the language you want to choose. Something similar could be done [in the Hellenic Posts]”*.

A software update would be very useful as well, as the old software can sometimes stall even further the transaction processes.

But even if all these educational seminars and initiatives took place, a communicational gap would still exist, according to the participants in the focus group. A great solution, in this case, would be to place cultural mediators for the most common ethnicities, in the branches that have the most immigrant customers, in 2-3 branches of central Athens, that is.

They should be present in the branches not only during the mornings, but in the afternoon as well, as a great portion of immigrant customers are seeking the services of the Hellenic Posts mostly in the afternoons. They could be employed either by the Hellenic Posts themselves or by an NGO or by a national or European program.

These cultural mediators would not only make the needed translations during the transactions and help with the intercultural communication, but would also prepare immigrants with for the needed paperwork and help them understand the whole process.

If the Hellenic Posts were to invest in this initiative, the end result would be that it would greatly increase its income. *“They will be able to serve them better. Because if we see it in market terms, when ELTA services more people and more efficiently, it could put more services in. Money transfer, etc. And it can become more attractive to them, in a nutshell.”*

One other suggestion was to extend the cultural mediator’s scheme on a national level through the use of a call center. As one participant puts it: *“But I believe we should not be restricted in that; to employ, let's say, two cultural mediators for three stores and think that everything will be solved. Because there are other areas in need as well”.*

It would be therefore very useful if frontline officers and immigrants alike could make a call and ask for an employee speaking the language they need, who would be informed about all the necessary processes and paperwork needed for each particular case.

This call center should be in operation during the working hours of the post offices and employee cultural mediators for a greater variety of nationalities than the cultural mediators employed for the branches. It should also be prepared to hire more cultural mediators if needed and to be flexible, as if for some reason *“migrants from another country, with a different language start coming [...] it is very different to hire one more cultural mediator in the call center than one in every branch needed”.*

On the informational level, now, a lot of suggestions were made as well. First and foremost, there should be brochures and informational leaflets in their language, that one could get in the branches of the Hellenic posts. The same goes with posters in their language that could be put up both in the branches and in areas densely populated by Third Countries Nationals. Also, it is seen as highly important that the internet site of the Hellenic Posts would be updated and translated in the most commonly used languages by immigrants in Greece.

Furthermore, a cooperation scheme with existing NGOs would be of great importance as well. NGOs that already educational and informational programs for immigrants could inform them and teach them, alongside with everything else, how they can use the services of the Hellenic Posts.

As most immigrants use smartphones, a mobile application with information about the procedures and the transactions in the Hellenic Posts, offered in many languages, would be also of great help. It should be an app “... *above all, user-friendly. Simple, with the basic procedures, with what supporting documents they need for each procedure. I think it's very simple, it can be done.*”.

3.5.3 Focus groups from Romania

3.5.3.1 Focus Group Discussion with professionals already working at the post sector

At this Focus Group we talked with 11 participants, employees of the Romanian Post, who come in direct contact with the clients.

The main conclusion that we have reached following the organization of this focus group is that there is a need for specialized training in order to provide postal services to third-country nationals clients. Although most of the focus group participants evaluates positively the interaction with TCN clients, there are some cultural and linguistic barriers, so the development of special programs for postal employees and TCN clients could significantly contribute on improving the services provided.

➤ Focus Group Discussion with individuals willing to enter the post service

This focus group was attended by 10 persons willing to engage in the postal sector.

Although the participants in the focus group already engaged in the Romanian Post believe that there are no significant differences of behavior between Romanian clients and TCN clients, the focus group with the persons willing to engage in the postal sector identified that they consider that the provision of the service may present both cultural and linguistic barriers so it would be very useful to run special programs for TCN clients in which the employees of the post are

involved, especially if it is possible to prepare them for the provision of additional information to TCN customers.

Among the focus groups conclusions, we mention also:

Most of the participants in the focus groups stated that they did not encounter any difficulties regarding the provision of the service to the TCN clients; moreover, the majority of the participants had a positive evaluation of the interaction with them, mentioning that they are often more courteous and informed than the Romanian clients

In terms of communication difficulties, the employees of the Romanian Post think that there is no such thing as most of the TCN clients already know what kind of service they want and come prepared for

Among the objectives that these special programs for TCN clients should have, the focus group participants mentioned:

- Creating an Intercultural Environment to Facilitate the Integration of Immigrants and Refugees
- Provide additional information on asylum applications, jobs, etc.
- Facilitate access to services by providing materials in international languages
- Preparing post employees to facilitate the provision of service to TCN clients and mediate any conflicts that have arisen.

Most of the participants in the two focus groups consider that they need specialized training to carry out their activities and provide the service to the TCN clients

Also, a need identified by focus groups is the need for specialized personnel to know how to mediate between post workers and TCN clients

Most of the participants in the two focus groups have reported that TCN clients are largely using the My AWB service of the Romanian Post, which greatly facilitates the

interaction, as My AWB can create your own parcel shipping documents and letters, and you can print them

Participants in the two focus groups think that immigrants and refugees have special needs over Romanian clients and that they often wish to be able to provide additional information about their needs

One of the most important conclusions reached by qualitative research is that there is a need for specialized training programs for post workers so that they can be able to meet the needs of TCN clients and provide additional information that can facilitate the interaction.

3.6 Conclusions from the quantitative and qualitative research

Both the quantitative and the qualitative research gave us a very good insight regarding both the problems employees and Third Country Nationals have during the transactions and their needs, which eventually helped us form a Training Needs Analysis for the employees of Hellenic and Romania Post offices.

First of all, it should be mentioned that, according to the employees, Third Country Nationals are a very important clientele, as they are very frequent customers. Therefore, the Hellenic and Romanian Posts would have only to gain, financially, if they implemented programs to better facilitate their transactions.

The most common countries of origin of Third Country Nationals that use the services of the postal offices are, according to the employees, Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, India, Philippines, China, as well as Morocco, Uganda, Nigeria and Somalia (Hellenic Posts).

Also, Third Country Nationals are reported almost all services of the Hellenic Posts, such as letters -though in the qualitative study it was mentioned that they were less interested in sending and receiving letters-, parcels, financial products and especially Western Union. The only products they don't use, are the philatelic ones and the gift shop. They are, therefore, quite important clients for the Hellenic Posts.

The most important problem, therefore, that both parties face, is the language difference. Employees say that immigrants don't speak the English language, immigrants that many employees don't speak English at all or that they have a poor knowledge of it.

Something that is seen both in the quantitative and the qualitative study, is that there are both employees and immigrants that speak English and that don't. So, in the case where both of the parties involved in a transaction speak English, or even when the immigrant customer speaks Greek, the transaction runs smoothly. However, when either one of the parties or even both parties involved don't speak English, then the communication problem becomes almost insurmountable.

The problems, however, are not solely confined in the oral communication, but in the written as well. Third Country Nationals have difficulty filling out forms which are only written in Greek, and they can't understand what they have to write where.

It is noted that most employees are older or have worked in the postal offices for many years. This is a factor that very much contributes to the work fatigue phenomenon that is observed among the Hellenic Post employees, which, in turn, limits the employees' patience to a minimum, which can be particularly evident when they can't understand what a customer, such as a Third Country National is trying to tell them or when they don't understand them.

However, most immigrants interviewed reported that the employees of the Hellenic Post offices are kind to them. Both immigrants and employees reported that the transactions were almost always successful, and this was due to their willingness to overcome their language obstacle in any way possible, either through using body language, through asking help from a colleague, through asking for help from other immigrants that are waiting in line and know both languages, through bringing their children or a friend along to translate, through having a representative come to the post offices for them, or even, through having the employee fill out the form on their own.

When it comes to information, Third Country Nationals are usually informed by word of mouth, as the internet page of the Hellenic or Romania Post Offices is only written in Greek and English

or Romanian and English and there are no leaflets or other informational sources in their languages.

Overall, what can be concluded from this study is that although there is a big communication gap between Third Country Nationals and the postal employees and although the first are poorly informed of the services provided mainly by the Hellenic Post, their rights and also the formalities needed to use a service, in the end, immigrants are serviced, through numerous ways of both trying to communicate.

The problem, therefore, lies in the time it takes to achieve a rudimental communication. The length of transactions with immigrants is at the cost of everyone involved; immigrants, employees, native customers, they all become agitated and therefore make more mistakes. At the end of the end, a lengthy transaction is unprofitable for the Hellenic or Romanian Post itself.

It is therefore considered highly important that specific programs are designed and implemented and that their main purpose will be to provide faster and better information and communication with immigrants, which could in turn lead to more frequent transactions and result in higher profits for the Hellenic Post.

This could be achieved, according to the participants of the study, through brochures in the most commonly spoken languages, translation of the website to other languages, apart from English, the translation of the website in other languages, creating posters in their neighborhoods and the refugee camps, informational campaigns through NGOs.

Creating an app of the Hellenic or Romanian Post targeted at Third Country Nationals, with information about all the services provided, the legislation, the necessary documents for each service and with examples on how to complete a form, all in their own language, would also be very helpful.

It is also necessary to create two call centers, one for immigrants who can't access the internet or are illiterate, so that they can be informed as well, and one for the employees mainly of the Hellenic Post, so that they can be aided at all times when they encounter new problems.

Also, some of the employee's suggestions included improving both the procedures and the documents of the Hellenic or Romanian Post, so as to adapt to the new needs, as well as installing new equipment to help go through the transactions faster, or even creating new products, aimed at the Third Country Nationals clients. Even having translation apps in their phones or computers would be of great help as well.

A second course of action would be to hire cultural mediators for the branches that have the most demand. Translation, though it takes some time as well, is seen as one of the best ways possible to successfully communicate. If Third Country Nationals were able to be serviced by a homogeneous employee who would know very well their language and culture and would help them collect the necessary papers for them, providing them psychological support, the whole process would be made much easier, quicker and efficient. These cultural mediators should be objective, defined and calm in order to be of help.

However, the most important proposal would be to educate the already existing staff, to act as somewhat cultural mediators themselves, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the Training Needs' Analysis.

Lastly, during these seminars, the company could identify people that are more patient and open and have empathy and therefore utilize them more. It is a good idea for these programs to distinguish people who can serve a large volume of immigrants.

The situation concerning the postal sector and TCNs in Romania is totally different.

Respondents stated that they did not encounter any difficulties regarding the provision of the service to the TCN clients. They evaluate very positive the interaction with them, while concerning communication participants consider that there are cultural and linguistic barriers generated largely by the fact that not all employees of the post speak a foreign language, in particular English.

The need for an Intercultural Environment to Facilitate the Integration of Immigrants and Refugees has been highlighted by post office employees. Most of the participants mainly in the

focus groups consider that they need specialized training to carry out their activities and provide the service to the TCN clients.

3.7 Swot Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postal services are important for businesses and EU citizens. • In Greece, there is community interpreting exists in order to help immigrants to have access to services of the hosting country • The employees are kind and helpful. • Some immigrants, living in Greece for a long time, have found a stable work. • As they familiarize with the process, though, they become less hesitant. • Hellenic Post employees are both men and women and they speak, apart from Greek, English as well, which definitely helps the communication between them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hellenic Post website is only available in Greek and in English. • Employees don't have historical, social and cultural knowledge, of the people and their way of relating. • Third Country Nationals due to the hardships they have endured, are afraid or hesitant
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural mediators are more than just interpreters, they are social agents. • Training on communication skills, which refer to mastery not only of written and oral language but also of other types of communication: body language, gestures, signs, symbols. • Third Countries Nationals seem to use two kind of services offered by the Hellenic Post, the financial services and the sending and receiving of packages. • Educational program concerning the current legislation, institutional framework and rules of the company would greatly aid them and reduce the time needed to service immigrant customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, the postal sector is currently in a period of profound change, including technological developments and new customer expectations. • Increasing number of customers who are Third Country Nationals and refugees, their educational level is perceived as low or not particularly high, something which becomes evident also from the language they are speaking • Concerning their work and financial status, they seem mostly unemployed and therefore they are in a very bad economic situation.

Strengths

Postal services play a key role in an effective and dynamic EU Market and they are of crucial importance to businesses and EU citizens alike. In Greece, the practice of intercultural mediation is closer to what is described as community interpreting, meaning that interpreting offered in the public services environment ensures that immigrants are able to enjoy the right to have access to services of the hosting country. Employees are kind and helpful, even if sometimes they can be a little annoyed during the transactions, due to the communication problems they face. Some of immigrants are living in Greece for a long time, have found a stable work. According to the immigrants interviewed, the employees of the Hellenic Post are both men and women and they speak, apart from Greek, English as well, which definitely helps the communication between them.

Weaknesses

According to the participants of the study, through brochures in the most commonly spoken languages, translation of the website to other languages, apart from English, the translation of the website in other languages, creates posters in their neighborhoods and the refugee camps, informational campaigns through NGOs. Employees have not historical, social and cultural knowledge, which means knowledge about history, traditions, customs, values and taboos of the people and their way of relating. Third Country Nationals due to the hardships they have endured, are afraid or hesitant. As they familiarize with the process, though, they become less hesitant. Third Country Nationals are people who have suffered and therefore are angry and uncomfortable during the transactions in the post offices, feeling that they are in a disadvantage due to the language barriers, some even getting angry due to that.

Opportunities

A second course of action would be to hire cultural mediators for the branches that have the most demand. If Third Country Nationals were able to be serviced by a homogeneous employee who would know very good their language and culture and would help them collect the necessary papers for them, providing them psychological support, the whole process would be made much easier, quicker and efficient. Communication skills, which refer to mastery not only of written

and oral language but also of other types of communication: body language, gestures, signs, symbols.

Threats

Postal sector is currently in a period of profound change, including technological developments and new customer expectations. Third Countries Nationals seem to use two kinds of services offered by the Hellenic Post, the financial services and the sending and receiving of packages. Concerning Immigrants work and financial status, they seem mostly unemployed and therefore they are in a very bad economic situation. An educational program concerning the current legislation, institutional framework and rules of the company would greatly aid them and reduce the time needed to service immigrant customers. However, the postal sector is currently in a period of profound change, including technological developments and new customer expectations.

4. Training needs' Analysis

4.1 TNA preparation, methodological notes and short comparative remarks

The TNA was formulated to capture an overall picture of the need for ongoing education and training, and to highlight any specific needs that postal employees, engaged in delivering services to TCN, feel they need. For this purpose, an employee's questionnaire was designed.

- The questionnaire contained 31 questions. Some were structured as statements related to the services that could be provided to TCSs.

Moreover, in depth interviews were conducted with TCSs in order to have a picture about their specific needs. Two focus groups were also performed by a trained moderator among a small group of respondents (employees of the post service or individuals willing to enter the post service), aiming to capture among other, the needs of the targets group (TCNs):

I. Employees from postal sector+ Stakeholders + other

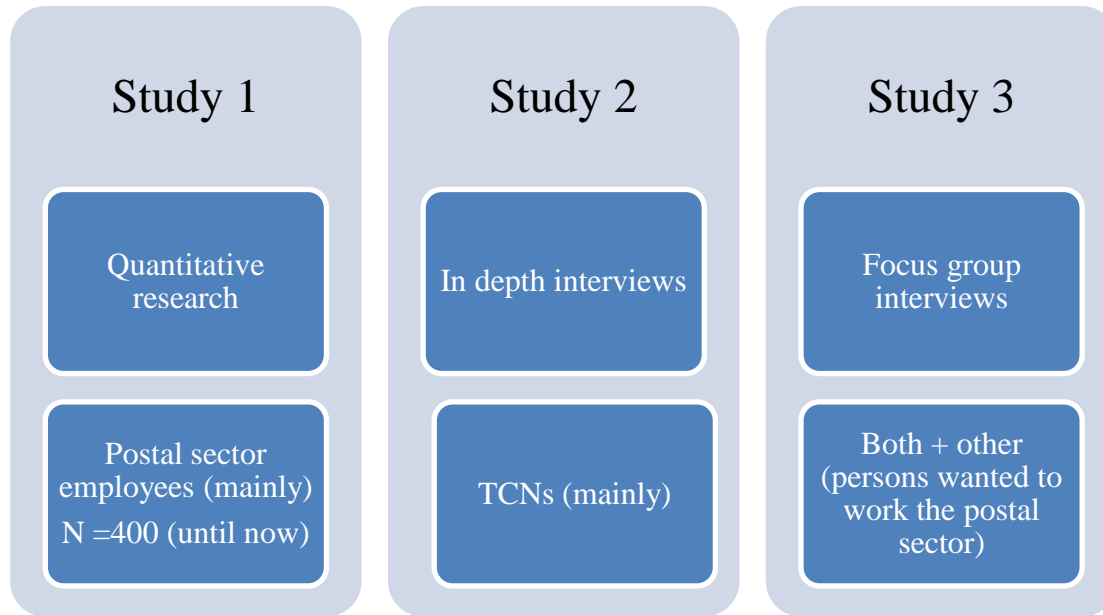
II. People willing to work at the postal sector

The TNA was piloted by detailed discussions with the high experienced ELTA personnel involved in the project. The questionnaire was sent directly to 200 employees (front desk), in locations with relatively high concentration or high service delivery of TCNs.

A series of relevant questions were asked to front desk employees to self-assess their training needs, and also for them to consider their level of competence. A central question was focused on the TCNs needs and the role or the need for the existence of cultural mediators in the postal sector. This Likert style of self-assessment is one of the most popular and is commonly used by psychologists and sociologists; the scale is also relatively quick to complete. The results of the TNA were collected and statistically analyzed by the members of National Centre for Social Research.

The design of the TNA is summarized in the following scheme:

Scheme 4-1 Design of the TNA



Thus, a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach was designed and implemented

- Culmed survey- Quantitative research to postal office employees
- Culmed survey- Users' qualitative research-in depth interviews
- Culmed survey focus group interviews
- Analysis of the results and synthesis
- Training needs analysis

Evidence suggests that in countries like Greece, professionals are flooded with questionnaires, aiming to elicit their opinions, but with no perceived action based on their responses. For that reason, the research team was prepared for a poor response rate. To avoid this result, TNA was sent by the ELTA and the Romanian post offices, and informing the respondents of the principles underlying the TNA philosophy. This allowed the TNA to have ownership and a more strategic direction. We were pleasantly surprised to find out we had an excellent response rate.

The planned collection of 200 + 200 questionnaires was successfully completed without any serious problem.

The results of the TNA were motivating and informative as they educed some common themes. A number of ‘interesting topics’ (i.e. areas that scored very high with a number of front desk officers) were identified as key areas of educational and/or training need or the need for cultural mediators. Although support has generally been acknowledged as a critical factor in adapting and coping with the needs of TCNs for those providing postal services, the evidence from the results of the TNA demonstrates that if educational opportunities are to be accessed and have a meaningful application in practice, then programs will be more effective if they are based on the employees’ learning needs and of course tailor made to the customer’s specific needs.

The approach adopted by members of the research team in the formulation of the TNA, and the analysis and interpretation of its results is an essential element in valuing front desk employees and working synergistically, thus supporting their ongoing development, and responding to their educational needs by providing relevant, effective and evidence based educational opportunities to support the postal service sector and mainly the front office desk aiming to cover the training needs of every employee in this working position

4.2 Quality of Services (QoS) in the postal service

Early models of service quality focus on the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of the service as it is actually delivered. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), the ultimate goal of a service or a company is to close this gap by meeting or exceeding customer expectations. Parasuraman et al., (1988), later developed the SERVQUAL model aiming to measure the gap between consumers’ expectations and performance ; the dimensions⁵³ of service quality included Reliability,⁵⁴ Responsiveness,⁵⁵ Assurance,⁵⁶ Empathy,⁵⁷ Tangibles.⁵⁸ If the

53 Initially this model (SERVQUAL model) was made of ten dimensions of service quality when created but later on these dimensions were reduced to five because some were overlapping.

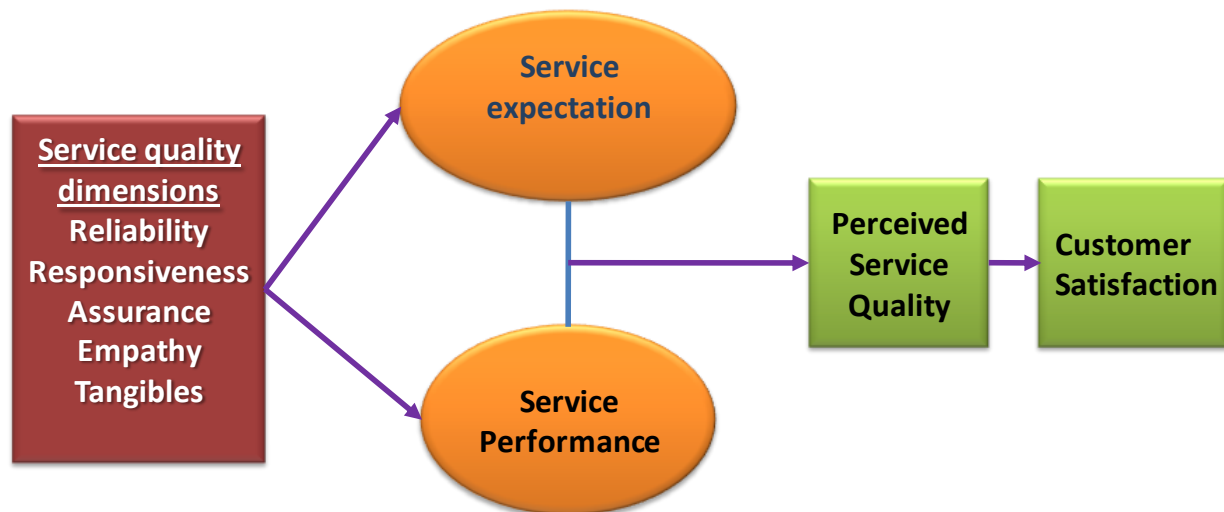
54The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

55 The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

customer expectation is higher than experience or expectation is less than or equal to experience the gap could be negative or positive respectively. The SERVQUAL, offers a reliable and valid measure of service quality with relatively stable dimensions across different service industries.

The following conceptual framework (Scheme) explains the underlying process, concerning service quality and customer satisfaction.

Scheme 4-2 Underlying process, concerning service quality and customer satisfaction.



In line with these aspects, Bitner, Zeithaml and Gremler (2010) describe the customer gap as the difference between customer expectations and perceptions and refer more concrete to four gaps as follows:

Gap 1: The listening gap. Not knowing what customers expect

Gap2: The design and Standards Gap. Not having the right service designs and standards.

Gap 3: The service performance Gap. Not delivering to service standards

Gap 4. The communication Gap. Not matching performance to promise

56 The ability to convey trust and confidence.

57 Care and individual attention given to customers

58 E.g. Physical appearance of personnel, facilities and equipment. Maintain clear and friendly tone of voice. Dressing and presentation of front desk representative, as well as appearance of reception area

Customer orientation and satisfaction becomes a key aspect of a modern business which is being implemented in order to meet and to win loyal customers (Tasic, Ratkovic, Beslin, 2011). If an organization wants to achieve the highest possible customer satisfaction and loyalty, it must be able to create and deliver a high- quality service that exceed the expectations of customers

Matzler et al., (2002), classify factors that affect customers' satisfaction into three factor structures;

1. Basic factors: these are the minimum requirements that are required in a product to prevent the customer from being dissatisfied. These are those factors that lead to the fulfilment of the basic requirement for which the product is produced and constitute the basic attributes of the product or service, having a low impact on satisfaction even though they are a prerequisite for satisfaction.
2. Performance factors: that is the factors that lead to satisfaction if fulfilled and can lead to dissatisfaction if not fulfilled. These include reliability and friendliness.
3. Excitement factors: these are factors that increase customers' satisfaction if fulfilled but does not cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled which include project management.

Employee empowerment is the center of the Analysis in many studies, However still there is a need to examine employees empowerment in respect of the front office staff, including, the assessment of the satisfaction toward employee empowerment from the viewpoint of the customers. The reasons being that the front office service is the nerve centre in many services including those in the postal sector where customers get their first impression.

Kanter's (1993) theory is based on the assumption that the structure of opportunities, power, and the proportions of people from different groups explained their behavior within an organisation. Applied to the postal sector front office desk, the structure of opportunities of a post office, the power structure within it, including, the proportions of the front office staff as presented by the management of the service determines the behavior of the front office personnel. Thus we may state that it is not the behavior of the frontline employees in the postal services that determined the quality of service delivery to customers, but the structure of the

organisation for which the staff are working. So, if there was to be any progress on offering of quality service that could translate to customer satisfaction, it would come about because the service/ organisation changed, and not necessarily the front office staff.

The Psychological Empowerment theory on the other hand explains that employee orientation toward work characteristics rely on determinants such as competence, impact, meaning and self-determination (Spreitzer, 1995). These are the internal stimulators that allow employees to feel or perceive they have the ability to get things done. Applied to the current study, individual orientation of the postal front office staff towards their work is determined by factors such as competence, impact, meaning and self-determination. These factors may stimulate and allow front office staff to feel or perceive they have the ability to get things done. This perception results in quality service delivery that translated to that the structure of opportunities, power, and the proportions of people from different groups explained their behavior within an organisation (Kanter, 1993).

In this perspective, service behavior could be identified as frontline employees serving TCNs with movements, voice, limited foreign language skills and attitudes. During the service encounter, the employees' emotions would be conveyed to customers through the contact with customers, and generate temporary effects on customers. For Bettencourt and Brown (1997) service behaviors may include exhibiting common courtesy, demonstrating accurate knowledge of policies and products, addressing customers by name, greeting and saying "thank you" to customers, and cross-selling the firm's services. According to John (1991), many marketing studies reinforce the importance of similar behavior for customer satisfaction, service quality perceptions, loyalty and sales performance. In this perspective improved service behavior would lead to higher levels of service quality in many postal services.

The methodology developed in the CULMED is very comprehensive as it covers the quality dimension of services and the behavior of services that is associated and extracted from the direct contact between the employees and clients / TCNs of post offices. Gap analysis is cross checked through the quantitative analysis and the questionnaires collected (400) mainly front desk

employees and the qualitative composite analysis including in depth interviews with TCNs and focus group interviews.

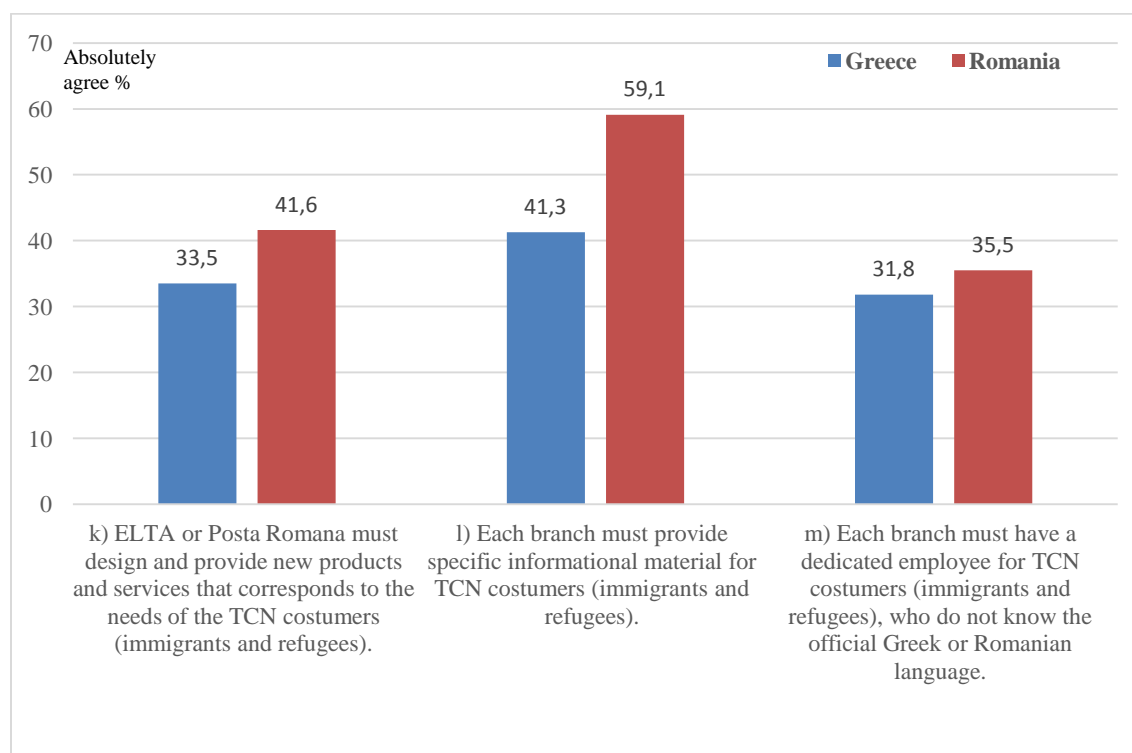
The following Tables present a comparative view from the questions 13, 16, 18, 20,21,22 and 23 of the quantitative research questionnaires. Knowing that the immigrant population in the two countries (Greece and Romania) have a different structure (more TCNs are found in Greece) the percentage differences at the statements of question 13 are significant. However, in both countries poor communication due to language barriers is very high (question 16).

Question 13. Select the appropriate box for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes of your personal experience:	Absolutely agree (%)	
	Greece	Romania
a) I am aware that in my daily work I will have customers that are TCN (immigrants and refugees) and I have been prepared for their service,	40,6	40
b) I kindly greet with a smile the customer who is a TCN (immigrant and refugee),	62	83
c) I listen carefully to the request/order of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) and I answer to their question	58,1	88,1
d) I detect discreetly the needs of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) based on the order,	48,6	85
e) I manage discretionally the objections of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) and I respect their view	37,2	68,6
f) I make certain that in my transaction with the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee), a relationship of trust between us is ensured,	51,1	74
g) I reliably advise the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) about the alternative solutions provided by the Posta Romana	57	81,1
h) I assess the satisfaction received by the TCN costumer (immigrant and refugee),	34,8	71,6
i) I personally handle the complaints of my TCN costumer (immigrant and refugee) and I take the initiatives needed to address them,	41,1	52,9
j) I record, on a regular basis, the frequency of visits and the product choices my regular TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees) make.	17,6	21,4
k) ELTA or Posta Romana must design and provide new products and services that corresponds to the needs of the TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees).	33,5	41,9
l) Each branch must provide specific informational material for TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees).	41,3	59,1
m) Each branch must have a dedicated employee for TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees), who do not know the official Greek or Romanian language.	31,8	35,5

Question 16. Which do you consider to be the main problems / main difficulties you face while serving a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee)? (select everything that applies)			
		Greece	Romania
		Yes (%)	Yes (%)
1	Poor communication due to language barrier	80,4	100
2	Lack of knowledge of the products and services	32	-
3	Non-compliance with line priority	14	-
4	Irritation during the service	2,6	-

Concerning the statements of question 13 (see Table above) we may see that elements of the respondents' level of satisfaction towards postal services. For example, tangibility of services refers to the availed evidences that represent services physically. Customers use these evidences (appearance of physical facilities, equipment, staff, and communication materials) to evaluate the quality of service. As we see to the specific statements in the next figure the percentage of those who absolutely agree are higher in Romania.

Figure 4-1 Percentage of those who absolutely agree are higher in Romania



Also, in question 18 that refers to the skills and features that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator the percentages for the Romanian employees are higher. However, in both countries more that 50% of the respondents absolutely agree that Professionalism is very useful as well as impartiality, flexibility, tolerance and cultural sensitivity towards the different.

Question 18. The following list consists of skills and features that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator. How important do you think these features could be in your	Absolutely agree (%)	
	Greece	Romania
a) Neutrality	46,3	69,5
b) Professionalism	70,9	84,7
c) Impartiality	58,5	75
d) Flexibility	52,6	71,9
e) Tolerance	55,5	72,2
f) Patience	64,3	82,6
g) Understanding different	46,5	59,4
h) Cultural sensitivity towards the different	44,8	56,3
i) Respect	68,4	84,9
j) Self-control	64,4	78,3
k) Confidentiality	60	86,5

In both countries respondents in a high percentage think that it is very useful to know and provide general information to TCN customers (immigrants or refugees) regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing, to provide additional support apart from providing general information, to know more as an employee at the postal sector regarding immigration, refugees and their legal status and to know more as an employee at the postal sector about the present situation and life conditions of the TCNs (Questions 20-23, see Table below).

Questions 20-23	Very useful (%)* (from 8 to 10)	
	Greece	Romania
20. How useful do you think it would be to know and provide general information to TCN customers (immigrants or refugees) regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing?	42,7	42
21. How useful do you think it would be to provide additional support apart from providing general information?	37,8	45,3
22. How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector regarding immigration, refugees and their legal status?	46	43.3
23. How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector about the present situation and life conditions of the TCN (immigrants and refugees) in your country?	42	36,7

Scale :

Not useful

Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4.3 Training needs results

Taking into account all the conclusions of both the quantitative and the qualitative study, we deemed important that an educational program for the employees of the Hellenic Post Offices takes place in order to give them the right tools and the proper guidance for them to feel more confident and finally achieve a much better outcome when servicing Third Country Nationals customers.

The Training Needs' Analysis that follows has five main educational axes; the English language; the basic terminology in the most commonly spoken language of Third Country Nationals; the cultural and historical background of Third Country Nationals; the legal and postal framework for servicing Third Country Nationals; and finally, conflict resolution-body language.

EDUCATIONAL AXE	TRAINING NEED	COMPETENCIES/ ATTITUDES ACQUIRED	EXPECTED OUTCOME
English Language	Advanced or intermediate level of English language use	Fluent interaction Good knowledge of all terms used in the postal services	Ability to communicate with English speaking customers and complete transactions
Basic Terminology In The Most Commonly Spoken Language Of Third Country Nationals	Terms and words mostly used in the services of the Hellenic Post Basic words and phrases for greeting and communicating	Basic level of interaction Basic knowledge of terms used in the postal services	A rudimental level of communication to facilitate the transactions with non-Greek and non-English speakers
Cultural And Historical Background Of Third Country Nationals	History of the most prominent ethnicities Culture of the most prominent ethnicities		Empathy, respect,patience, tolerance, neutrality
Legal And Postal Framework For Servicing Third Country Nationals	Legal framework per ethnicity Hellenic Post's framework per ethnicity	Knowledge of the necessary procedures for each service, according to ethnicity	Diffusing better information Faster transactions
Conflict Resolution-Body Language	Signs Body language Avoiding a conflict De-escalating a conflict	Recognition of signs and body language Use of signs and body language Conflict avoidance	Non-verbal Communication Patience Calmness

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

As it was made evident in the study, the most important and maybe easiest way to achieve quality and fast communication is the knowledge of English, for the part of the employees at least. Therefore, it would be very useful if they learned the English language, for those who don't already know it, or to improve them for those who do.

The goals of the English language training should be that the employees will be at easy carrying out everyday dialogues in English and even more so, during the servicing Third Country Nationals. Therefore, knowledge of all terms used in the postal services is considered vital.

BASIC TERMINOLOGY IN THE MOST COMMONLY SPOKEN LANGUAGE OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

However, even if all employees of the Hellenic Post were to speak English perfectly, not all Third Country Nationals would. So, it would be very useful and would accelerate the transaction processes, if the employees were to be taught of several words and phrases that they use in the transactions in their languages. Words such as “name”, “surname”, “address”, or phrases such as “welcome”, “good morning”, “where do you want to send the letter”, etc., would both help the customers and understand and would open them up, make them relax, as they would see that the employees are really trying to communicate with them.

Also, as it is exceptionally difficult to learn and remember all this information in just a few training sessions, the goal should be to learn how to pronounce these words and to recognize them when customers say them and to then have a booklet with them, containing all these words and phrases, with translation and a phonetic guide, so as to look them up every time they need it.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

Of course, teaching employees about the culture and the hardships Third Country Nationals have faced both in their own countries and in Greece, would greatly help them understand how to better approach them and, finally communicate with them.

However, there was a reluctance among employees of the Hellenic Post to accept that a cultural education is needed. But it has to be clearly shown to them that transactions are more of a social issue and therefore it is necessary to have a cultural education.

These educational seminars should be comprised of both historical and cultural courses for the most prominent ethnicities that use the Hellenic Post offices, with the aim of reinforcing the feelings of empathy, respect, tolerance, neutrality and patience in the Hellenic Post employees, either they are working as frontline officers or elsewhere in the company.

LEGAL AND POSTAL FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

Moreover, an educational program concerning the current legislation, institutional framework and rules of the company would greatly aid the employees and reduce the time needed to service immigrant customers.

This program should teach the employees the legal, as well as the Hellenic Posts' framework per ethnicity, so as for them to know which procedures they should follow for each transaction, without having to call their supervisors or the central offices, or without making errors that eventually would inhibit the completion of a transaction.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION-BODY LANGUAGE

Finally, it is also of great importance to include in the educational programs for the employees of the Hellenic Post Office seminars about conflict resolution and, primarily, avoidance. As it has been already indicated, misinformation and poor communication often leads to tension and should the employees know how to avoid it or how to calm down themselves and an agitated customer, it should be much easier to actually service them.

These lessons should include methods of avoiding and de-escalating a conflict and how to keep one's temper in difficult situations. Also, it should include body language methods, such as signs, or other forms of non-verbal communication, its use and its recognition.

5. ANNEXES

5.1 Quantitative Research Questionnaire

Cultural Mediators in the Postal Sector

(CULMED)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR

**Employees of Posta Romana, as well as, people who have been
employed or are interested in working at the postal sector**

The employees' questionnaire aims to evaluate their perception about their daily transactions with customers – Third Country Nationals (TCN), immigrants and refugees, as well as, their views regarding the improvement of the provided services.

Dear colleague,

It would be of great help and support to all of us, if you could dedicate 10 minutes of your time to answer this questionnaire, which is intended to contribute to the provision of excellent services for your customers- and the improvement of your provided services, mostly towards Third Country Nationals (immigrants and refugees).

Bucharest, April 2019

The content of this questionnaire is used exclusively for statistical purposes while anonymity and CONFIDENTIALITY is strictly applied to the data

Unique Serial Number

(SN _ _ _ _)

A. General information of the employee in Posta Romana

1. Please note your sex and year of birth:

a) I am:

Male ☐ ₁Female ☐ ₂b) I was born in

--	--	--	--

 (year)

2. What is the highest educational level you have completed? (Please select only one)

Upper secondary education (High school graduate)

Post-secondary non-tertiary education (College graduate)

Short-cycle tertiary education

Bachelor's degree or equivalent (University/Technological Educational Institute graduate)

Master's degree or equivalent

Doctorate or equivalent

99 Other: _____

3. Religion (Select the answer from the list below)

Christian

Other: _____

99 No Answer/ Refusal

4. Evaluate your performance on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "very poor performance", 5 means "average performance" and 10 means "Excellent performance", in...

	Speaking	Reading	Writing
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
a. English language	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
b. French language	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
c. Other foreign language (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃

5.a Years of professional experience in the postal sector: ____ (number)

5.b How many years do you work in Posta Romana? ____ (number)

5.c Your contract is: Permanent ☐ Open Ended Term ☐ Fixed Term ☐6.a You are: Supervisor ☐ Postal Window Employee ☐ Other (e.g. FT) ☐

6.b How many years of work experience do you have in customer services? ____ (number)

B. General information about the interaction of a Posta Romana employee with Third Country National customers (immigrants and refugees)

7. What is the country of origin of foreign customers that you usually provide your services?

(select what applies - provided that there is at least one option 1-6 or

13 other country of origin for Third-Country Nationals (immigrants and refugees))

Third Country Nationals (immigrants and refugees)		Other Country	
1	Pakistan	7	Ukraine
2	Afghanistan	8	Bulgaria
3	Syria	9	Romania
4	Egypt	10	Albania
5	Iraq	11	Georgia
6	Philippines	12	Russia
13	Other country of origin(specify):		

How often do you provide services to TCN customers (immigrants and refugees)?

1	Daily
2	At least once a week
3	More than once per month (but less than 4)
4	Less than 1 time per month
5	Occasionally

What kind are the usual transactions with TCN (immigrants and refugees)?

1	Send / receive mail
2	Packages
3	Group Sendings
4	Financial products
5	Commercial products (retail)
6	Additional Services: Western Union
7	Additional Services: Eurogiro
8	Additional Services: Abroad Checques
9	Multiple services (combination of the above, specify):

In which language is the transaction usually conducted?

1. Romanian 2. English
 Mix of Languages (specify): _____
 Other language: _____

11. Are there any difficulties in communicating, during the provision of services?

None
 A little
 Moderate
 Enough
 Very much

12. Taking into consideration the total of transactions with TCN customers (immigrants and refugees), how would you generally evaluate them?

Excellent
 Very good
 Good
 Moderate
 Bad

TCN Customer service (immigrants and refugees) from the postal window

13. Select the appropriate box for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes of your personal experience:	Opinion 1: absolutely disagree, 5: absolutely agree				
a)I am aware that in my daily work I will have customers that are TCN (immigrants and refugees) and I have been prepared for their service,	1	2	3	4	5
b)I kindly greet with a smile the customer who is a TCN (immigrant and refugee),	1	2	3	4	5
c)I listen carefully to the request/order of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) and I answer to their question	1	2	3	4	5
d)I detect discreetly the needs of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) based on the order,	1	2	3	4	5
e)I manage discretionally the objections of the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) and I respect their view	1	2	3	4	5
f)I make certain that in my transaction with the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee), a relationship of trust between us is ensured,	1	2	3	4	5
g)I reliably advise the TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) about the alternative solutions provided by the Posta Romana	1	2	3	4	5
h)I assess the satisfaction received by the TCN costumer (immigrant and refugee),	1	2	3	4	5
i)I personally handle the complaints of my TCN costumer (immigrant and refugee) and I take the initiatives needed to address them,	1	2	3	4	5
j)I record, on a regular basis, the frequency of visits and the product choices my regular TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees) make.	1	2	3	4	5
k)Posta Romana must design and provide new products and services that corresponds to the needs of the TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees).	1	2	3	4	5
l)Each branch must provide specific informational material for TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees).	1	2	3	4	5
m)Each branch must have a dedicated employee for TCN costumers (immigrants and refugees), who do not know the official Romanian language.	1	2	3	4	5

Employees in the postal sector and cultural mediation

14. On a scale from 0 which means ‘absolutely unlikely’ to 100 which means ‘absolutely likely’, , what would it be according to your opinion, the possibility of offering your help towards a

colleague in order to solve a problem between the transaction with a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee)?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Absolutely unlikely

Absolutely likely

15. While serving TCN customers (immigrants and refugees) you find yourself – directly or indirectly – feeling often.....If you had to choose, which of the following feelings would you say is more frequent? Choose an answer for «first choice» and one more answers for «second choice», which would be the next most common feeling:

a. First choice

b. Second choice

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. Anger | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Sadness | 2 | 2 |
| 3. Detestation | 3 | 3 |
| 4. Sympathy | 4 | 4 |
| 5. Joy | 5 | 5 |
| 6. Fear | 6 | 6 |
| 7. Hope | 7 | 7 |
| 8. Satisfaction | 8 | 8 |

16. Which do you consider to be the main problems / main difficulties you face while serving a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee)? (select everything that applies)

Poor communication due to language barrier
 Lack of knowledge of the products and services
 Non-compliance with line priority
 Irritation during the service
 Other: _____

17. What do you believe could help improve the TCN customer support (immigrant and refugee)? (select everything that applies)

Modern equipment, e.g. computerization, automation, etc.

New products and services that TCN customers want

Continuous improvement of procedures and documents concerning TCN customers

Continuous training to improve my qualifications needed for TCN customer support

Establishment of a postal employee – cultural mediator

Other: _____

18. The following list consists of skills and features that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator. How important do you think these features could be in your own service towards TCN customers (immigrants and refugees)?	Opinion 1: Not important, 5: Absolutely important				
a)Neutrality	1	2	3	4	5
b)Professionalism	1	2	3	4	5
c)Impartiality	1	2	3	4	5
d)Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5
e)Tolerance	1	2	3	4	5
f)Patience	1	2	3	4	5
g)Understanding different cultural codes	1	2	3	4	5
h)Cultural sensitivity towards the different	1	2	3	4	5
i)Respect	1	2	3	4	5
j)Self-control	1	2	3	4	5
k)Confidentiality	1	2	3	4	5

19. Taking into account all of the facts, and especially the fact that your current job position is possible to establish you as a “cultural mediator” between an organization such as Posta Romana and a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee), how satisfied would you be when performing that role during a transaction? Use the following scale, in which “0” means “No satisfaction” and “10” means “Absolute satisfaction”. (select only one number)

No satisfaction Absolute satisfaction

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

20. How useful do you think it would be to know and provide general information to TCN customers (immigrants or refugees) regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing?

Not useful Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

21. How useful do you think it would be to provide additional support apart from providing general information?

Not useful Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

22. How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector regarding immigration, refugees and the their legal status?

Not useful Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

23. How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector about the present situation and life conditions of the TCN (immigrants and refugees) in your country?

Not useful Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

24. How useful do you think it would be to know more as an employee at the postal sector about the institutions regarding the protection, reception and integration of TCN in Romania and the EU (immigrants and refugees)?

Not useful Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25. How useful do you think it would be as an employee at the postal sector, to connect with the TCN communities (immigrants and refugees), in order to collect useful information about TCN's and Posta Romana for the purpose of improving the service provided to them?

Not useful

Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

26. How useful do you think it would be, as an employee in the postal sector, to have at your disposal, a set of instructions and practices for the transactions with TCN customers (immigrants and refugees) in order to get a better understanding on the cultural particularities and diversities?

Not useful

Absolutely useful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

27. How feasible do you think it is in the present circumstances for an employee at the postal sector to be able to manage the mental pressure and / or the conflicting climate around the issue of TCN (immigrants and refugees)?

Not feasible

Absolutely feasible

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector to put aside their political, religious or other personal beliefs during a transaction with a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee)?

Not feasible

Absolutely feasible

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector to provide instructions and advice during a transaction with a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) only if and when requested?

Not feasible

Absolutely feasible

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30. How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector to personalize its situation during a transaction with a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee) and respond accordingly -?

Not feasible

Absolutely feasible

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

31. How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector to recognize and address with self-control its own emotional and mental load during a transaction with a TCN customer (immigrant and refugee)?

Notfeasible

Absolutelyfeasible

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5.2 Qualitative Research Guides

5.2.1 In-depth interviews with employees of the Hellenic Post

«Cultural mediators in the postal sector»

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLE

In-depth Interviews

- Relative freedom of the respondent
- Simple questions
- introduction for the interview topics but without directing the respondent
- interview from general to specialized

Introduction:

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study. I would like to assure you, from the outset, that you will remain anonymous and we will not hold any file format with your name on it.

Interview axes and questions

Axis 1: Socio-demographic characteristics

Question 1. Could you describe the immigrants who approach your services to look for your products mentioning some key characteristics?

[We look for information that characterizes the group of immigrant clients, such as gender, age, education, nationality, language, religion, marital status, place of residence, living conditions,

work, financial status, social and cultural ties / values. The aim is to determine the respondents' picture of the socio-economic characteristics of the users of ELTA services and products]

Question 2. Do you think there are any distinctive features of immigrant clients that differentiate them from Greek clients and what are they?

[We seek the perceptions of respondents about potential socio-economic factors that put immigrants in a different position than Greeks and can act as contributors to their different treatment and service.]

Axis 2: Use of ELTA products and services by immigrants

Question 3. Could you describe the use of products and services that immigrants make?

[We are looking for information that describes the perceptions of immigrants about their consumption of products and services. We are interested in information that outlines the profile of use (products and services) for immigrants, such as Sending / Receiving Mail (Courier Mail), Courier / Parcels, Group Shipping, Financial Products, Retail Products, Many Services]

Question 4. Do you think that foreigners / immigrants differ from Greeks in the use of the services / products provided and what are these differences?

[We are seeking that the respondents describe to us a user profile that may be different for immigrants from that of Greeks. Or else, they may argue that there is no difference between the two populations in terms of use of one or more products / services. E.g. high concentration in a single product]

Axis 3: Immigrants' Behavior

Question 5. Describe, according to your view of the immigrants serviced, if they are 'regular' customers or if they have something that differentiates them compared to nationals / Greeks.

[We try to record if immigrants behave differently during transactions.]

Question 6. Do you think immigrants behave differently compared to customers who are Greek?

[We want to see if respondents differentiate immigrants from Greek clients in terms of the behavior they first exhibit when serviced]

Question 7. How would you generally describe the differentiation of immigrant clients?

[We want to see if respondents will outline a profile for immigrant clients in the case they report issues, conciliation, length of service, or other migrant service problems.]

Question 8. Do you think that there are specific problems of understanding and serving immigrants with regard to Greek clients?

[We seek to identify potential problems that are specific to immigrants served by Hellenic Post employees and lead to specific service needs for this population.]

Axis 4: Information

Question 9. Do you think immigrants are informed about your products and services from different sources than Greek customers?

[We record respondents' perceptions of the source of information for immigrants seeking postal products / services in relation to Greeks]

Question 10. Do you think there are particular difficulties for immigrants in getting information about your products / services in relation to Greeks and what are these difficulties?

[We try to identify particular difficulties for immigrants to find out about product / service opportunities / options]

Question 11. Have you developed a specific information activity (brochure, special announcement in the bulletin board) for your own service that relates to immigrant clients? If yes, can you briefly describe it?

[We attempt to identify or highlight the absence of targeted (better?) Actions in migrant service / information efforts.]

Question 12. Do you find it useful to have specific programs (information in other languages, service by a foreign employee, etc.) at your service for immigrants?

Question 12.1. If yes, can you briefly describe the specific objectives of these programs for immigrant clients?

Question 12.2 If "no" do you think there is a need to develop specific programs for migrant clients in your organization and what specific objectives do these programs need to have?

[We attempt to highlight the existence or absence of specific programs that cover the needs of immigrants, as well as the viewpoints of respondents on the need for such programs to operate]

Question 13. Do you think that immigrants face special difficulties comparing with Greeks and what are they?

[Identification of specific difficulties is sought. Difficulties can be related to language, understanding, understanding, trust, financial difficulties etc.]

Question 14. Do you think immigrants have different needs from Greek customers and what are they?

[We attempt to record respondents' views on the specific needs of immigrants in the use of ELTA products and services]

Question 15. Do you think that the specific needs of immigrant customers can be met in existing products / services in addition to the needs of Greek customers?

[Regarding of respondents' perception of the specific needs of immigrants.]

Question 16. Do you think there is a need to develop specific programs for immigrant clients?

Question 16.1. If yes, can you briefly state the key goals they need to have?

Question 16.2. If 'no', why?

[We try to identify respondents' opinion on the usefulness of developing targeted programs or the view that immigrants are not differentiated by Greeks in the process of using ELTA products / services]

5.2.2 In-Depth Interviews with Third Country Nationals

«Cultural mediators in the postal sector»

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLE

In-depth Interviews

- Relative freedom of the respondent
- Simple questions
- introduction for the interview topics but without directing the respondent
- interview from general to specialized

Introduction:

Thanks for agreeing to participate in this study. I would like to assure you, from the outset, that you will remain anonymous and we will not hold any file format with your name on it.

Interview axes and questions

Axis 1: Socio-demographic characteristics

Question 1. Could you describe the employees who service you some of their key characteristics?

[We look for information that characterizes the group of employees, such as gender, age, education. The purpose is to determine the respondents' picture of the socio-economic characteristics of the employees providing services and products of the ELTAs]

Question 2. Do you think there are any distinctive features of some employees that differentiate them from others and what are they?

[We seek to highlight respondents' perceptions of potential socio-cultural factors that differentiate some employees from others when serving immigrants e.g. courtesy, speech and language other than Greek]

Axis 2: Offering ELTA products and services to immigrants

Question 3. Could you describe which specific products - services you mainly seek for in the Hellenic Posts?

[We are looking for information that describes the demand for products and services from immigrants. We are interested in information outlining the profile of use (products and services) that immigrants are looking for, such as Sending / Receiving Mail (Courier Mail), Courier / Parcels, Group Shipping, Financial Products, Retail Products, Multiple Services]

Question 4. Do you know if there are differences with Greeks in the demand / use of services / products and what are these differences?

[We seek that they describe to us a profile of products that are mainly requested by themselves (immigrants) and are different from those of Greeks. Or they may argue that there is no difference between the two populations in terms of demand for one or more products / services. E.g. high concentration in a single product]

Axis 3: Behavior of officials when servicing immigrants

Question 5. Describe according to the picture you have in mind if you are serviced as well as Greek customers.

[We try to record if immigrants experience different behaviors in service]

Question 6. Do you think that employees behave differently to you than their Greek customers?

[We want to see if respondents differentiate immigrants from Greek clients in terms of the behavior they first exhibit when served]

Question 7. How would you describe the differentiation of your service in general?

[We want to see if respondents will outline a profile for immigrant clients if they report issues, conciliation, length of service, or other migrant service problems]

Question 8. Do you think that there are specific problems of understanding and servicing in comparison with the Greek customers?

[We seek to identify potential problems that are specific to immigrants served by Hellenic Post staff and lead to specific service needs for this population]

Axis 4: Information

Question 9. Do you think you should be informed about your products and services from different sources than Greek customers?

[We record respondents' perceptions of the source of information for immigrants seeking postal products / services in relation to Greeks]

Question 10. Do you think that there are particular difficulties in getting information about your products / services in relation to Greeks and what are these difficulties?

[We try to identify particular difficulties for immigrants to find out about product / service opportunities / options]

Question 11. Would you want to have some special information activity (brochure, special announcement in the bulletin board) that concerns you as a migrant customer? If yes, can you briefly describe it?

[We try to identify or highlight the absence of targeted (better?) Actions in migrant service / information efforts.]

Question 12. Do you find it appropriate to operate specific programs for you (information in other languages, servicing a foreign employee, etc.) ?

Question 13. Do you think that you face any particular difficulties in serving the Greeks and what are they?

[We seek to identify specific difficulties. Difficulties can be related to language, understanding, understanding, trust, financial difficulties etc.]

Question 14. Do you think immigrants have different needs from Greek customers and what are they?

[We attempt to record respondents' views on the specific needs of immigrants in the use of ELTA products and services]

Question 15. Do you believe that your specific needs can be met in existing products / services alongside the needs of Greek customers?

[Respondents' perception of the specific needs of immigrants compared to Greeks recorded]

Question 16. Do you think there is a need to develop specific programs for immigrant clients?

Question 16.1. If yes, can you briefly state the key goals they need to have?

Question 16.2. If 'no', why?

[We register respondents' opinion on the usefulness of developing targeted programs or the view that immigrants are not differentiated by Greeks in the process of using ELTA products / services]

5.2.3 Focus Groups with Employees and Prospective Employees of the Hellenic Post

«Cultural mediators in the postal sector»

Interview guide

Qualitative research, focus group / discussion points (heterogeneous group)

- Spontaneous discussion on the services (of Hellenic Post) provided, the needs arising in relation to Third-Country Nationals and for which services in particular. Response to the identified needs of immigrants.
- Use of products and services by immigrants and differences with Greeks.
- Opportunities and problems for understanding and communicating with immigrants (Which nationalities?) / Response to specific needs depending on the country of origin.
- Level of satisfaction of immigrants with regard to company personnel (Hellenic Post)
- Needs for services, including services in large urban centers and areas where there is a high concentration of migrants
- Improving the visibility of postal services for immigrants and Third-Country Nationals and promoting social inclusion (How?)
- Customer Satisfaction Level (TCN) with regard to the prevailing environment in service areas
- Proposals for a better service to Third-Country Nationals
- Proposals to meet the educational needs of employees in highly concentrated areas of Third-Country Nationals

EXTRACTS OF THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

3.1 EXTRACT OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH AN EMPLOYEE OF THE HELLENIC POST

[...]

INTERVIEWER:

Nice. Now on behavior, if you want, let's go a little bit on the third axis that has to do with immigrant behavior. Could you describe us according to your view if immigrants are 'ordinary' customers or if they have something that differentiates them from the Greeks?

RESPONDER:

Yes, eh, they are not ordinary post clients, meaning in the average post branch you will see more Greeks and of certain ages. But given the momentum of the phenomenon, there must be a corresponding preparation to properly accommodate this public and service it properly.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. What differentiates them?

RESPONDER:

Okay, (...) in an environment they don't know, so they're looking for where to get the priority paper, what to expect, where to go, there's a process to ask more so they're somewhere out of their waters. The First time.

But then I think it's a lot easier to adapt because they get a familiarity and I think people are very friendly so it comes close to them.

Now, the differentiation is I would say more in terms of their demographic characteristics so this differentiates them first, at least in terms of visual. Now, behaviors, well, behaviors are not....

There are differences in culture, so we do not understand them, we do not understand them, they understand ours and they are difficult to say enough. But this will be something that along the way will be solved as (...)

INTERVIEWER:

Nice. How would you describe the differentiation of immigrants in general, with, for example, issues such as understanding problems and so on. In other words, if there are specific problems of understanding, I should probably put it better, and of service to immigrants?

RESPONDER:

There are some, that is if you are now sending a letter or a parcel, I think that understanding is very easy. But if it is more complex, that is, it requires identification, which may require collaboration with other services there is a matter for us to communicate it, to understand it properly, to understand it and to understand what is happening and to respond.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

RESPONDER:

Then there is the knowledge, its level, how many of them know how to write, yes..., that is it. If they can ..., or the letter they also use to describe who they are, if they are in Latin, if they can write, if they can present it.

And there are again immigrants depending on the country of origin. The poste is a global institution, so it is not a question of understanding the services, it is simply about how we will translate into that, the technical postal term, which has a common interpretation, understands what the other is but understands what we mean. There is the issue.

INTERVIEWER:

How are these problems handled?

RESPONDER:

Well...

INTERVIEWER:

For example, if one needs to fill out a form in Latin characters and you do not have this option.

RESPONDER:

I don't know now about this...

INTERVIEWER:

That he doesn't know.

RESPONDER:

Yeah, it's an issue of improvisation and there is no one way. Right now, it's a matter of improvisation. There is not a circular or a strategy, how to deal with it.

[...]

5.2.4 Example of an in-depth interview with a Third Country National

INTERVIEWER:

Where are you from?

RESPONDER:

Afghanistan.

INTERVIEWER::

And how many years are you here? Or months?

RESPONDER:

Yes, 1 year and 6 months.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, perfect. Would you describe us the people in ELTA, the people that work in ELTA, if they are women or men, if they speak English except Greek, for example.

RESPONDER:

They sometime speak English, but they want to speak Greek.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Are they kind to you? Are they kind during the service?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

They are kind, they ok. Ok. Which product do you mostly use here? Why do you use ELTA mostly?

RESPONDER:

Excuse me?

INTERVIEWER:

Like, you use ELTA to send money, to receive money? To send packages? To send what?

RESPONDER:

Yes, yes, I received money from Iraq....

INTERVIEWER:

Do you send money abroad in Afghanistan?

RESPONDER:

Sometimes.

INTERVIEWER:

Mostly you receive.

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Do you know if there are any differences between the products that you use and the products that the Greek customers use?

RESPONDER:

The same.

INTERVIEWER:

The same. You have not different?

RESPONDER:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Do you think you are being serviced the same way with the Greek customers, from the people here? Do they treat you the same way they would treat Greeks for examples?

RESPONDER:

Same.

INTERVIEWER:

The same. Ok. Do you have any problems during the process, the communication or...?

RESPONDER:

Sometimes the government of this....

INTERVIEWER:

No, no, in ELTA, only in ELTA. Do you have any problems during the communication?

RESPONDER:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Is it easy for you?

RESPONDER:

Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Does it take long time sometimes?

RESPONDER:

Sometimes people....

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, but not something that....

RESPONDER:

No, no.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Where did you get informed about ELTA? Who told you about ELTA? Who informed you?

RESPONDER:

About what?

INTERVIEWER:

About ELTA.

RESPONDER:

Here?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, you told you here is....

RESPONDER:

We have one social worker, if we need about information, about the process I got....

INTERVIEWER:

Is it from a non-government organization?

RESPONDER:

From Praxis.

INTERVIEWER:

So ...the information you need. Ok.

Do you think there are some difficulties for you to inform about the products here in reference with Greek people? Not you, generally immigrant people refugees people do you think they have problems to be informed about the products here? Do they face any problems? Not only you.

RESPONDER:

Yes, some people have problems because they don't have information about the Greek products.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, so they find it difficult to be informed. Would like here to be a leaflet in your language with the products that they have? Would you like that there was a leaflet in your language or someone who speaks your language to service it? Somebody to speak your language so that understand better? Would you like it here there was somebody that speaks your own language? In the people that work here. Would you like it? Would you find it useful?

RESPONDER:

Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Or if there was a leaflet – a leaflet is like this – with information in your language?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

You would find it useful?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Any other program you would like it to be for you?

RESPONDER:

I like the English classes, language classes. I have one class at Metaplasia....

INTERVIEWER:

These classes are about you to learn Greek? Or not?

RESPONDER:

Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

But they are not here. We are speaking only about here. About the post office, not generally.

RESPONDER:

Ok, ok. Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

So, you don't have anything else to propose. What you would you like it to have here? What would it make easier for you here?

RESPONDER:

There is a problem in the post office because some staff they don't speak English.

INTERVIEWER:

They don't speak English.

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

So, for example you would like the staff to speak English, all of them.

RESPONDER:

Yes. But sometimes they are not speaking English.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Do you think the needs you have are fulfilled here? The needs you have referring to ELTA. Do you understand the question? No, ok.

INTERVIEWER:

Every day you come here; you do what you are coming for?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

You are serviced every time.

RESPONDER:

Yes. Two or three times I came here about my (...), about (...) they send some people to another country and they see from another country...

INTERVIEWER:

So, your needs are covered.

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok. Thank you very much.

5.2.5 Extract of in-depth interview with a Representative of Institutions involved in the integration of Third Country Nationals

[...]

INTERVIEWER:

Very nice. Do you think that immigrants face special difficulties in servicing, in comparison with the Greeks?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

And what are these?

RESPONDER:

Of course, they do. They firstly encounter the difficulty of the language.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, great.

RESPONDER:

They face the difficulty of non-familiarization with the processes, as I said, of services, of documents, in general, of what one may need to integrate. They face racist difficulties. They face intercultural differences that makes it difficult. Yes, there is definitely an extra difficulty.

INTERVIEWER:

Great.

RESPONDER:

That is to say, they can face extra difficulty just because they are Third-Country Nationals and all this brings things.

INTERVIEWER:

Indeed. Do you think immigrants have different needs than Greeks? That is, they need different services, because immigrants are more focused on some services while Greeks are more focused on other services, there is a greater demand on another part that you provide?

RESPONDER:

Yes. Yes, I could say so. But in what sense? In the sense that, yes and no, why? Because it is assumed that the Greeks have resolved the issue of their basic needs. And I say, however, that we are supposed to be at this conjuncture at a time when, due to the financial crisis, often they do not have the essential goods. Because having one, housing, but being, for example, without electricity or without food or water, is being homeless.

So, in essence, a migrant or refugee or asylum seeker who is on the street and does not have housing is not in a much worse situation than a Greek who may have a roof over his head or the house may not be functional. Or he can also be on the road.

Well, yes, housing is the basic demand of people with refugee profiles and it is perfectly understandable. Then comes the food, then the clothes, and then comes finding work. Most of them do not want to stay in Greece, they just pass through Greece and often cannot go outside, so they feel trapped in it.

So, the need, I would say is more at the level of basic goods in these people. Whereas in the Greeks we have left or should have left it and gone to slightly different qualities of needs.

But because of the crisis, I insist, we have turned back. The basic goods are not taken for granted to the Greek population either. So, in the end I don't know if I can answer yes or no, and yes and no.

INTERVIEWER:

Nice. Do you believe that the specific needs of immigrants can be met in existing services alongside the needs of Greeks?

RESPONDER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Great.

RESPONDER:

I think they can.

INTERVIEWER:

Perfect. And do you also think there is a need to develop specific programs for immigrants?

RESPONDER:

What kind of programs?

INTERVIEWER:

Special.

RESPONDER:

Special programs for immigrants. Programs could be developed... what could be developed to some degree is to certify the knowledge of these people coming from their countries of origin,

some of them very well educated and lacking the documents, because they have lost them in their journey, or there was no correspondence of what they did there with what may or may not be needed here.

Well, this is essential for the part of their integration that is the key to employment, finding jobs. So, programs could be developed, if we were to speak on the public level, for languages and computer programs, which are now only run by NGOs. [...]

5.2.6 Extract of a Focus-Group with employees of the Hellenic Post

[...]

INTERVIEWER:

We are in the section "Understanding problems and communicating with immigrants". So, you want to add something to it?

Mrs. _____:

Yes. all of these processes have a risk. When you complete a migrant's check, he can certainly tell you that "yes, but I didn't tell you closed Domokos prisons, I told you Corfu"; there is a risk.

But you have to make a decision, that is. Either send him away, because you can't do otherwise. Or to say I'll listen carefully at that moment to what he tells me, with the risk, of course, that next time he questions it.

Communication with immigrants has a great difficulty. Because as we said, first of all, they don't know the language at all.

Mrs. _____:

But that's where the problem lies.

[...]

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have a view, an impression, anything, for the level of immigrants' satisfaction with contacting Hellenic Posts' staff?

Mrs. _____:

Neither do they have a good image, neither do we.

Mrs. _____ :

For me, it depends.

INTERVIEWER:

That is? Tell us some examples.

Mrs. _____ :

They are dissatisfied with all this because they cannot be serviced with it, with the problem of understanding, and with communication. We are again about the same. So, we are both unhappy.

INTERVIEWER:

In cases where it is not successful, communication cannot be achieved, after all.

Mrs. _____ :

There are, of course, cases where they are successful.

DIALOGUE

Mrs. _____ :

Okay, when they feel you are really interested, there are some who pay back in their own way. That is, okay, let's not tell they are all the same.

Mrs. _____ :

Does your feeling, that is, finally, as a feeling, is that we service them or that we do not serve them?

Mrs. _____ :

We service them.

Mrs. _____ :

I mean, okay, beyond...

Mrs. _____ :

At least, now, okay, I said, let's not tell it's all the same. At least my office also services the above. That is, the guys are spending time, that is, they have forgotten the Greek. The frontline officers have forgotten the Greek.

[...]

5.2.7 Extract of the Focus-Group with prospective employees of the Hellenic Post

[...]

Mr. _____:

Let me say something about the previous discussion and the needs for training. I think that Hellenic Post could do this, especially for people who work in such places, which M. mentioned, the part of intercultural communication is something different from communication.

It would be very helpful for employees to know some of the basic characteristics of religion, culture, morals and customs, the basic population groups they serve, because it plays a very important role.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you explain that, how it helps them?

Mr. _____:

In serving and understanding the other's way and mentality. Because many times ...

[...]

Basically, it's a work tool too. Because he can ask for something. The way he will talk, the way he will look. To be able to provide better service, more quality, more efficient.

Mrs. _____:

Faster.

Mr. _____:

It will help the employee along the way save time. To be able to become more effective. Resolve issues before they even occur. De-escalate tensions, manage conflicts and crises. To be able to feel that he can respond to the request of the person who goes to serve.

For me, not too many things, the basics. Remember that too many people have different ways of communicating. That is, a move they make can be offensive to us. And that will automatically disrupt the service process. One piece is this.

On top of what E. said, I would also stress conflict management. Because there are specific stages. There is a win-win, there is an escape, there is generally a situation to manage.

From the few I have seen when I have contacted them, I see that there is also a stress issue, a time issue. Therefore, some time management and stress management techniques could help.

In general, if one goes and observes, very often, because they cannot communicate properly, tensions are created and voices are increased slightly. A reduction in intensity, through some techniques, would help.

Certainly, about diversity, what is diversity, and how we can manage the foreigners, the different, in general. I think there are some educational needs that they will find in front of them.

That's all.

[...]

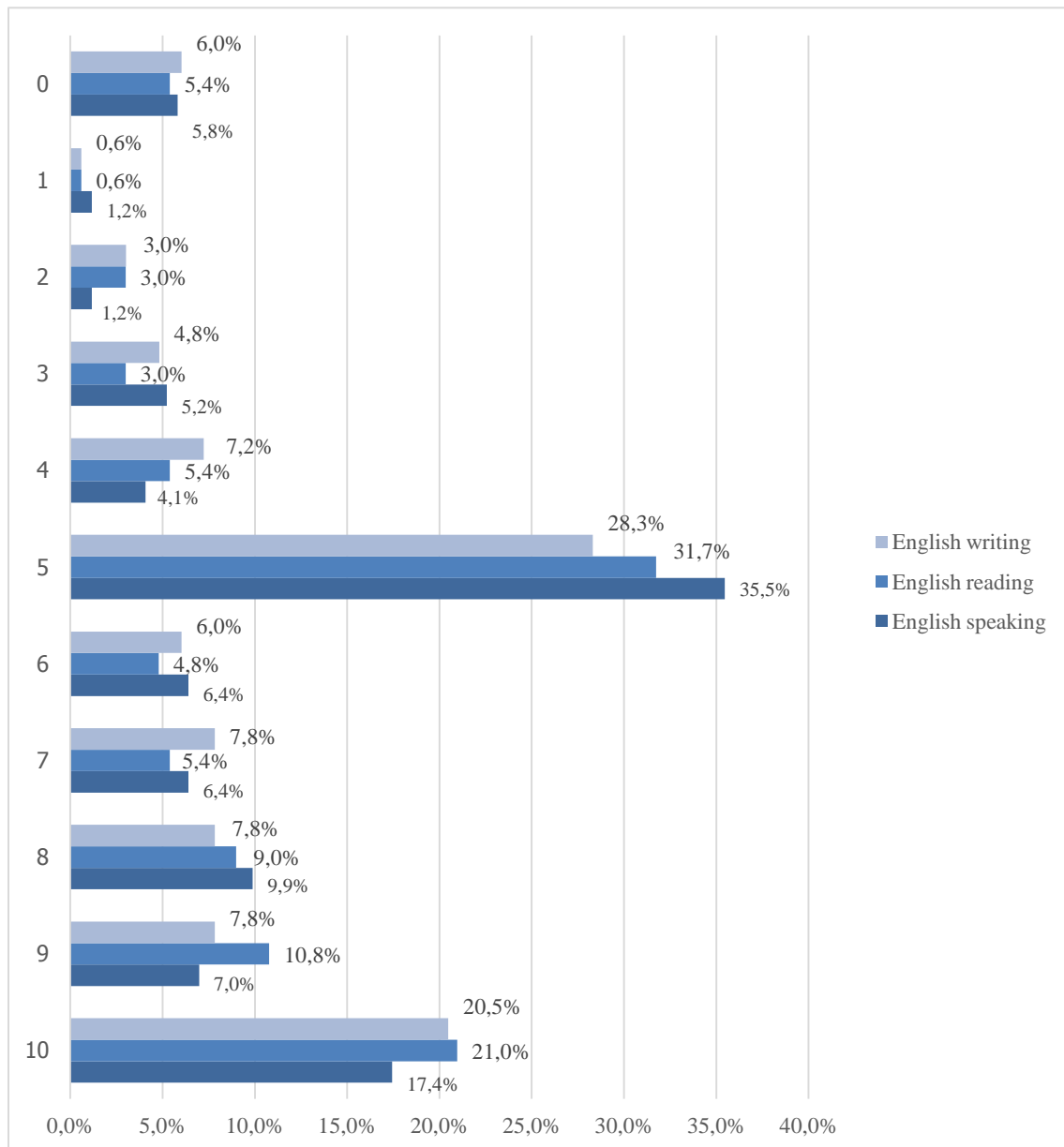
5.3 Results from the quantitative research in the case of Greece:

The survey involved a total of 200 postal sector employees and the analysis was performed on valid cases. Most of employees are female (66,7%) and 33,3% are male with an average age of 49 years where the youngest employee has an age of 21 and the oldest employee is 65 years old. The highest level of education more than half of the employees (55,6%) have completed is post-secondary (Post-secondary non-tertiary education: 1,6%, Short-cycle tertiary education: 5,1%, Bachelor's degree or equivalent: 30,8% and Master's degree or equivalent: 7,1%) while over four in ten employees (43,9%) are a graduate of upper secondary education. Only 0.5% has completed other education which was unrevealed. The overwhelming majority identifies as a Christian (96,4%) while only 2,5% of the employees chose not to answer and 1% is devoted to undisclosed religion.

The most common position they hold is in the postal window (44,3%), while over one in four employees is a supervisor (25,3%). The rest of the employees (30,5%) occupy a position in the provision of other products or services of the Hellenic Post. The vast majority is bound by a permanent employment contract (85,4%), while only 6,6% of the employees are on an open ended term and 8.1% are on a fixed term. The average years of professional experience the employees contain in the postal sector are 9 years, the least experience amounts to 3 months and the most are 38 years of experience. In customer service, 12 years is the average years of experience, the least amount is no experience at all while the most are 35 years of experience. As for years of work at Hellenic Post, the average years of work the employees have completed is 3 years, the least amount of work is 3 months and 36 years of work is the most.

Knowledge of a variety of foreign languages is observed. The vast majority of employees (86%) evaluated their performance in English while over one in five (21,5%) rated their abilities in French. Another 12,4% evaluated their abilities in other languages (10,2% in one other language, 2,2% in two other languages). Concerning English, nearly a third of the employees rated their abilities on an average performance (writing: 28,3%, reading: 31,7%, speaking: 35,5%) while almost one in five employees evaluated their English at an excellent performance (writing: 20,5%, reading: 21%, speaking: 17,4%). Only a small amount of employees believe their abilities in English are of very poor performance (writing: 6%, reading: 5,4%, speaking: 5,8%).

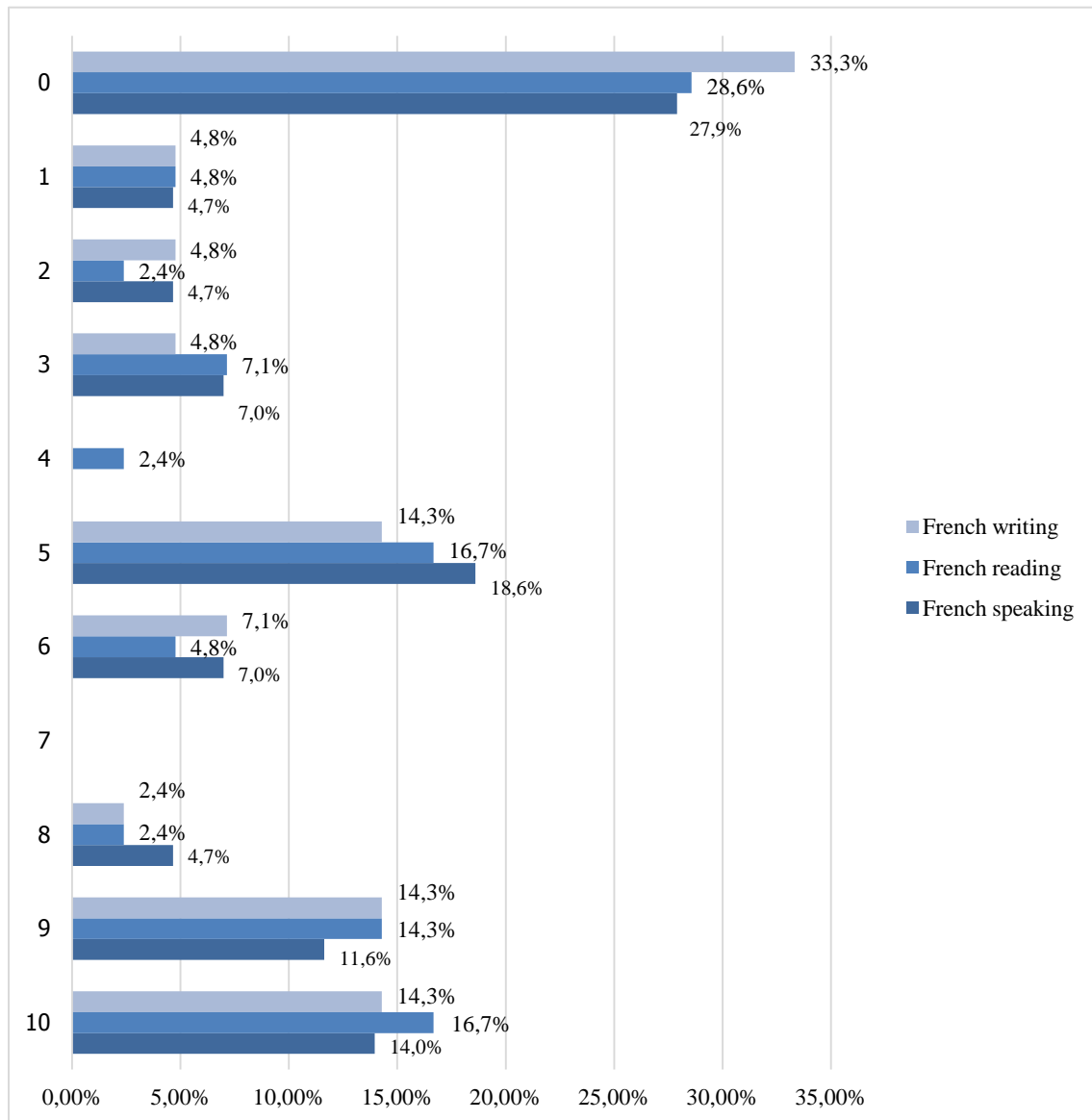
Figure 1.1: Evaluate your performance on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “very poor performance”, 5 means “average performance” and 10 means “Excellent performance” in English



As for French, nearly a third of employees consider their performance to be very poor (writing: 33,3%, reading: 28,6%, speaking: 27,9%) while on the other hand, around half the previous amount of employees rate their abilities at an excellent performance (writing: 14,3%, reading: 16,7%, speaking: 14%). A similar trend is observed around the grade of average

performance(writing: 14,3%, reading: 16,7%, speaking: 18,6%). Let it be noted that no employee rated their abilities at a grade of 7.

Figure 1.2: Evaluate your performance on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “very poor performance”, 5 means “average performance” and 10 means “Excellent performance” in French



Regarding the other languages where the employees were tasked to fill the language they wish to evaluate their abilities on, a total of 27 evaluations (23 for one other language, 4 for two other languages) were made. Notably, over half of those evaluations (55,6%) were about Italian,

followed by German (22,2%) and Spanish (18,5%). Only one employee evaluated their performance in Albanian.

Table 1: Other languages

		Albanian	German	Italian	Spanish	Total
Employees	N	1	6	15	5	27
	Percentage	3,7%	22,2%	55,6%	18,5%	100%

The employees encounter a wide variety of foreign customers. Most notable is that the vast majority of them (88,1%) has provided services to Albanians, followed by 65,8% of employees who have serviced Bulgarians and 64,2% who have served Pakistanis. Over half of the employees (50,8%) have provided their services to Syrians as well. Only 14,5% of the employees have served customers of other non-listed countries.

Table 2: Amount of total employees who have serviced customers of foreign origin

Country of origin	Percentage of total employees
Pakistan	64,2%
Afghanistan	32,1%
Syria	50,8%
Egypt	31,6%
Iraq	24,4%
Philippines	21,8%
Ukraine	45,6%
Bulgaria	65,8%
Romania	45,1%
Albania	88,1%
Georgia	35,2%
Russia	44,6%
Other	14,5%

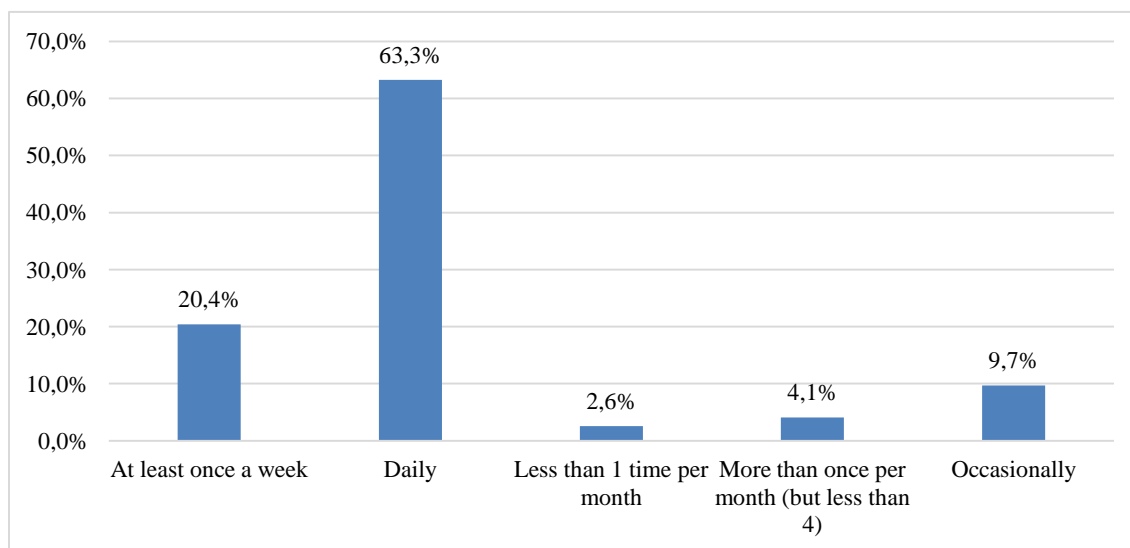
About other countries which were not listed and had to be filled by the employees, a total of 14 additional countries of origin were added. Most notably, 4 employees stated they have serviced customers reigning from China and Turkey respectively. Followed by 3 employees who have provided service to Indians, and 2 employees who serviced customers from Poland. The rest of

the countries of origins had only 1 employee respectively who have provided their services to their citizens. Additionally, it can be observed that an employee stated they have serviced customers reigning from African countries, instead of stating a single country.

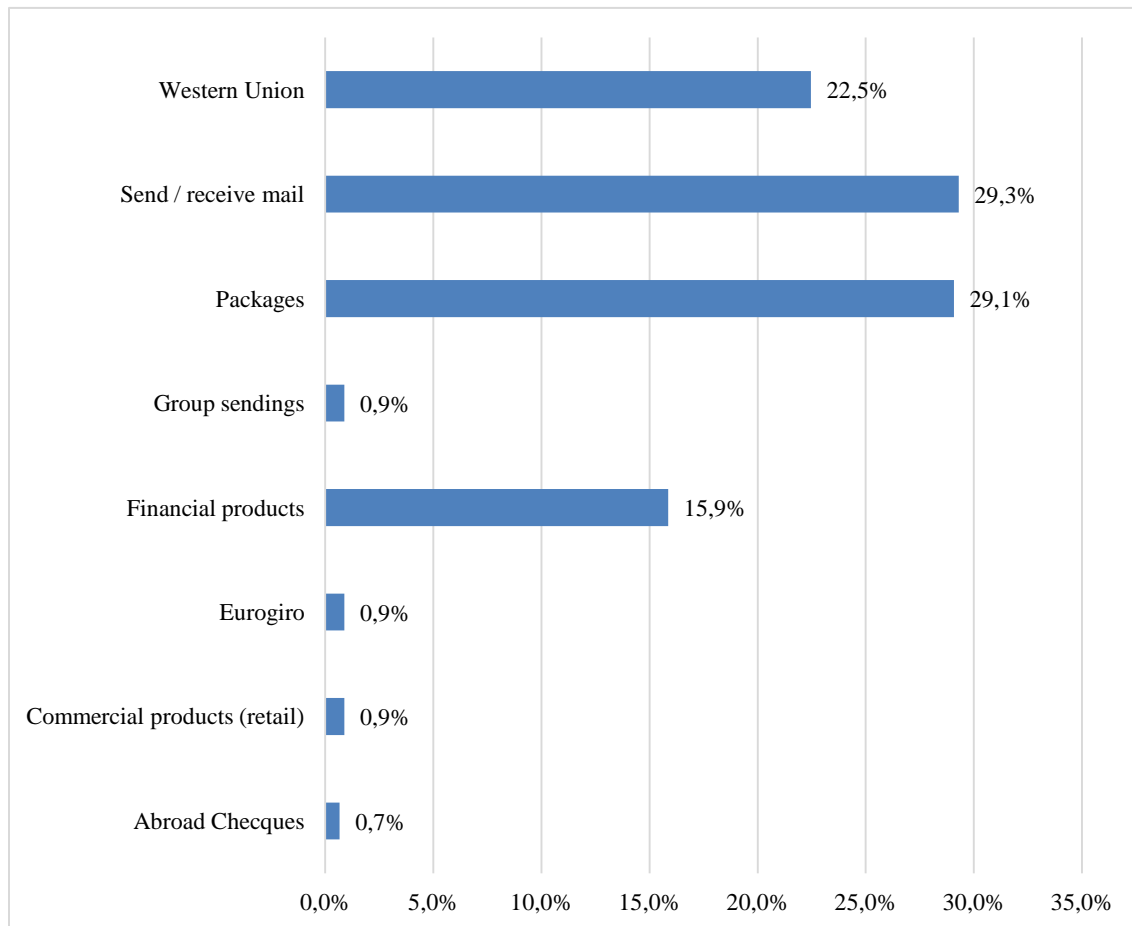
Table 3: Other countries

Country of origin	Employees	
	N	Percentage
African countries	1	4,3%
Algeria	1	4,3%
China	4	17,4%
Ghana	1	4,3%
India	3	13%
Iran	1	4,3%
Congo	1	4,3%
Kurdistan	1	4,3%
Poland	2	8,7%
Somalia	1	4,3%
Turkey	4	17,4%
Cameroon	1	4,3%
Eritrea	1	4,3%
Kazakhstan	1	4,3%
Total	23	100%

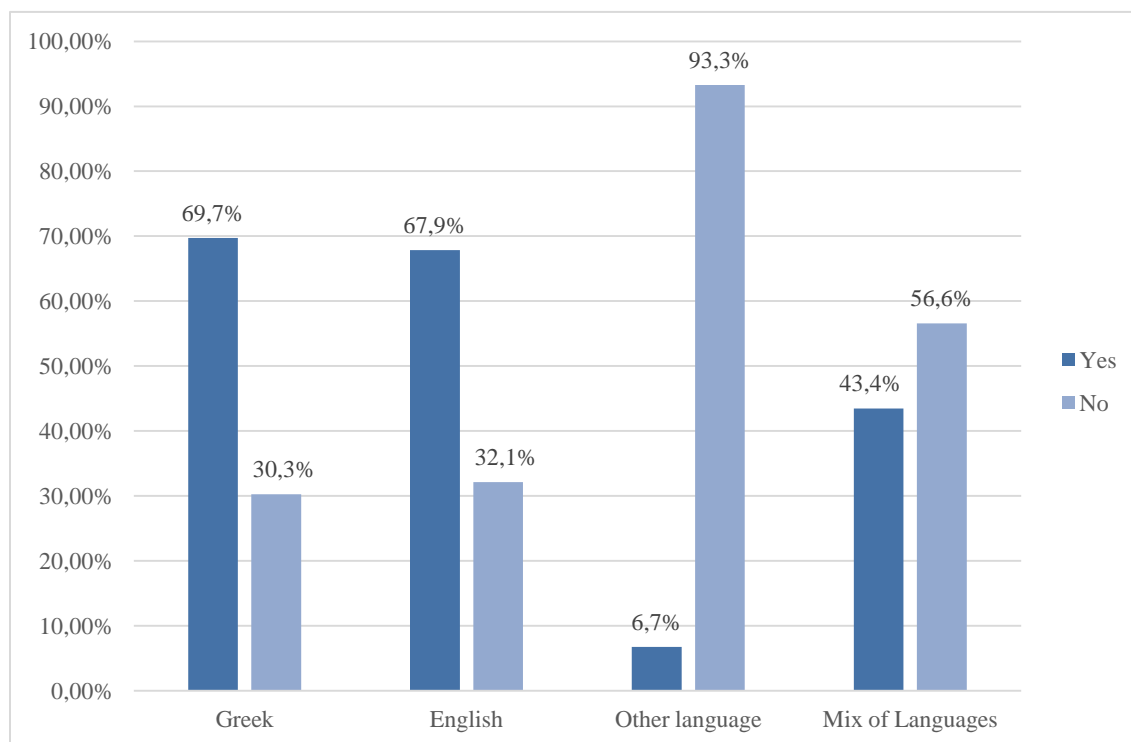
The frequency of service towards TCN customers is observed to be high. More than six in ten employees provide their services to TCN customers in a daily frequency (63,3%) while 20,4% service at least once a week. Nearly one in ten employees (9,7%) provide their services occasionally and 4,1% service more than once per month but less than four. Only 2,6% service less than 1 time per month.

Figure 2: How often do you provide your services to TCN customers?

In the provision of service, the usual transaction contains multiple services (75%) while the rest of the transactions (25%) consist of only one. The main transactions are mail (29.3%) and packages (29.1%), followed by Western Union (22.5%) while 15.9% consist of financial products. On the other hand, group sendings, commercial products, and Eurogiro each have a low presence of 0.9% while only 0.7% of transactions consist of abroad cheques.

Figure 3: What kind are the usual transactions with TCN?

According to the employees, the majority of them usually conduct transactions with TCN in a single language (56,6%) while the rest of them required a mix of languages (43,4%). Greek was used by nearly seven in ten employees (69,7%) in order to perform transactions while in a similar fashion, 67,9% of them made use of English. Only 6,7% of employees required other languages.

Figure 4: In which language is the transaction usually conducted?

A total of 4 other languages were filled which were used by a total of 13 employees in order to conduct transactions. The majority (8) had to make use of French, followed by 3 employees who had to resort to sign language/body language. Albanian was used by 1 employee while another employee stated they performed transactions in the customer's native language.

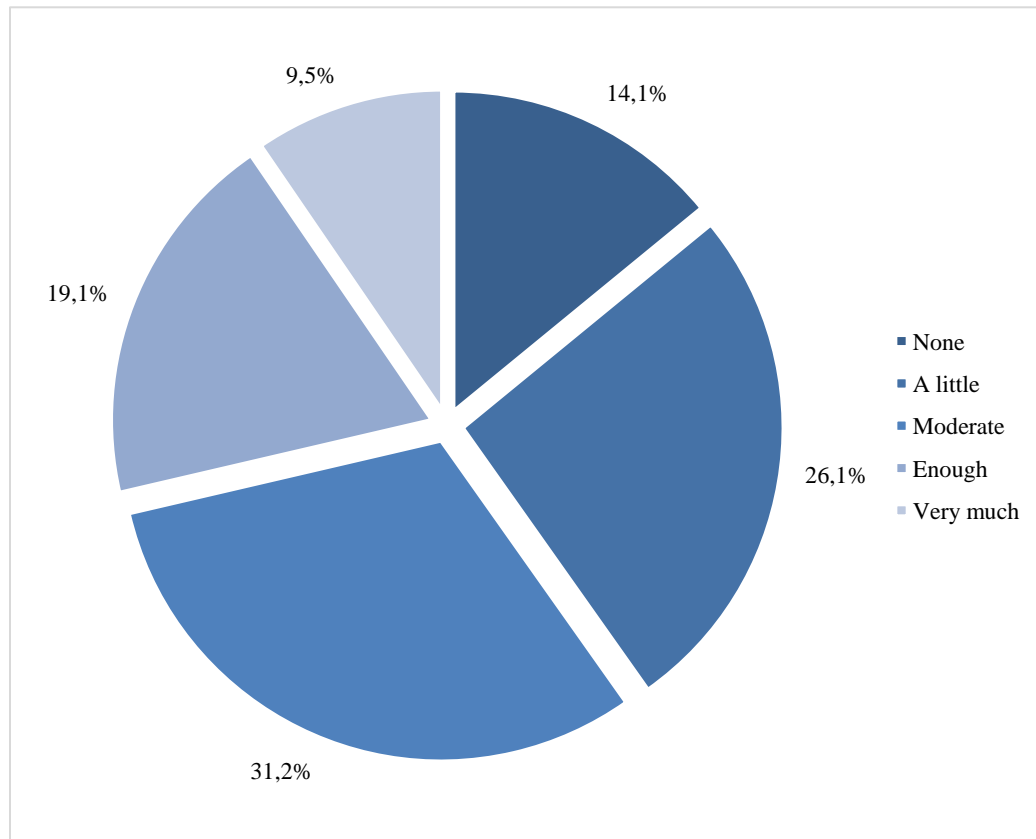
Table 4: Other used languages

		Albanian	Customer's native language	French	Sign Language/Body	Total
Employees	N	1	1	8	3	13
	Percentage	7,7%	7,7%	61,5%	23,1%	100%

The communication between the employee and the TCN customer during the provision of services involved a fair amount of difficulties. Nearly a third of employees consider moderate difficulty (31,2%) in communicating during the provision of service followed by a little difficulty which was experienced by over a quarter of employees (26,1%). Another 19,1%

encounter enough difficulty and 9,5% of the employees rate the level of difficulty at very much. On the other hand, 14% have experienced no difficulty at all.

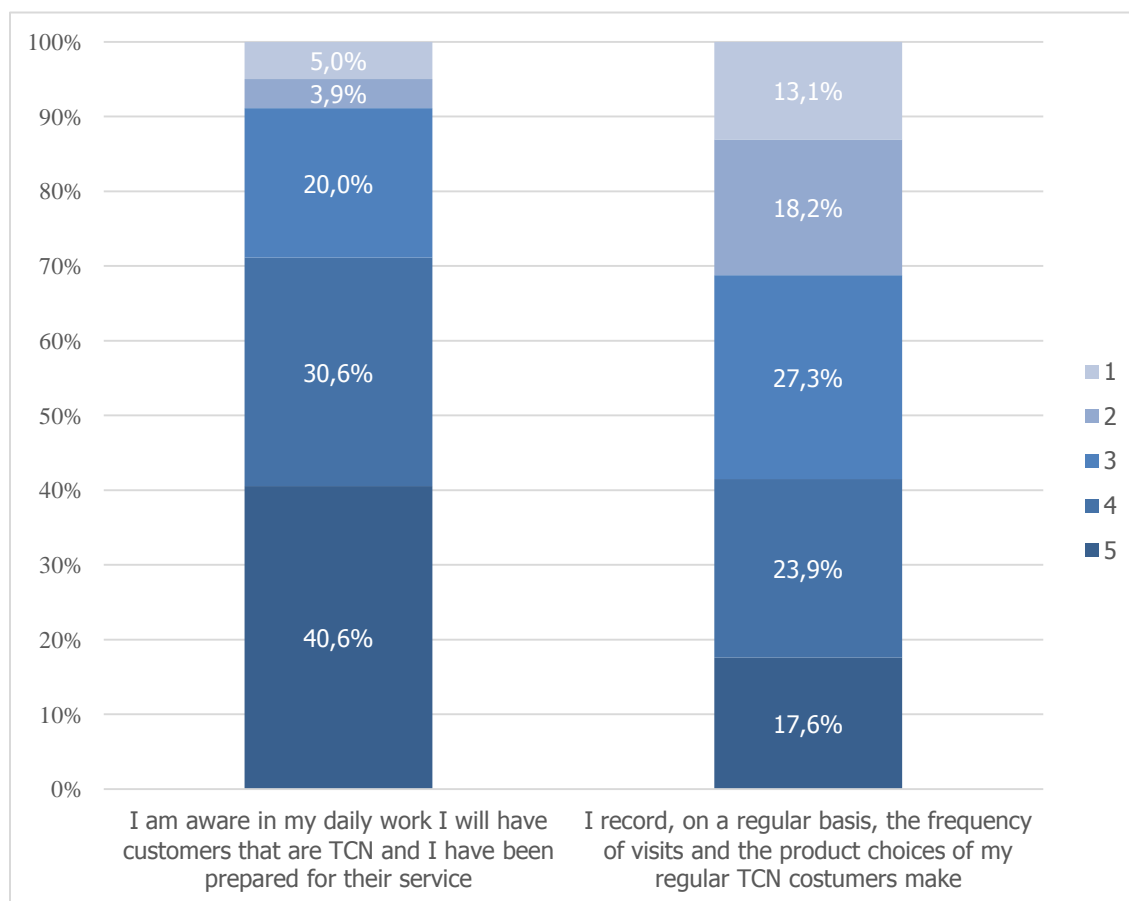
Figure 5: Are there any difficulties in communicating, during the provision of services?



In matters of agreement regarding their customer service towards TCN customers, the employees mainly responded positively. More particularly, over four in ten employees (40,6%) absolutely agree in being aware that in their daily work they will have costumers that are TCN and they have been prepared for their service and only 5% state they unquestionably disagree.

Furthermore, over a quarter of employee (27,3%) rate their agreement at a grade of 3 in regard to recording, on a regular basis, the frequency of visits and the product choices their regular TCN customers make. Undoubtedly agreement, in this case, is considered by 17,6% of employees while 13,1% absolutely disagree.

Figure 6.1: Select the appropriate rating for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes from your personal experience (Where 1 means absolutely disagree and 5 means absolutely agree)

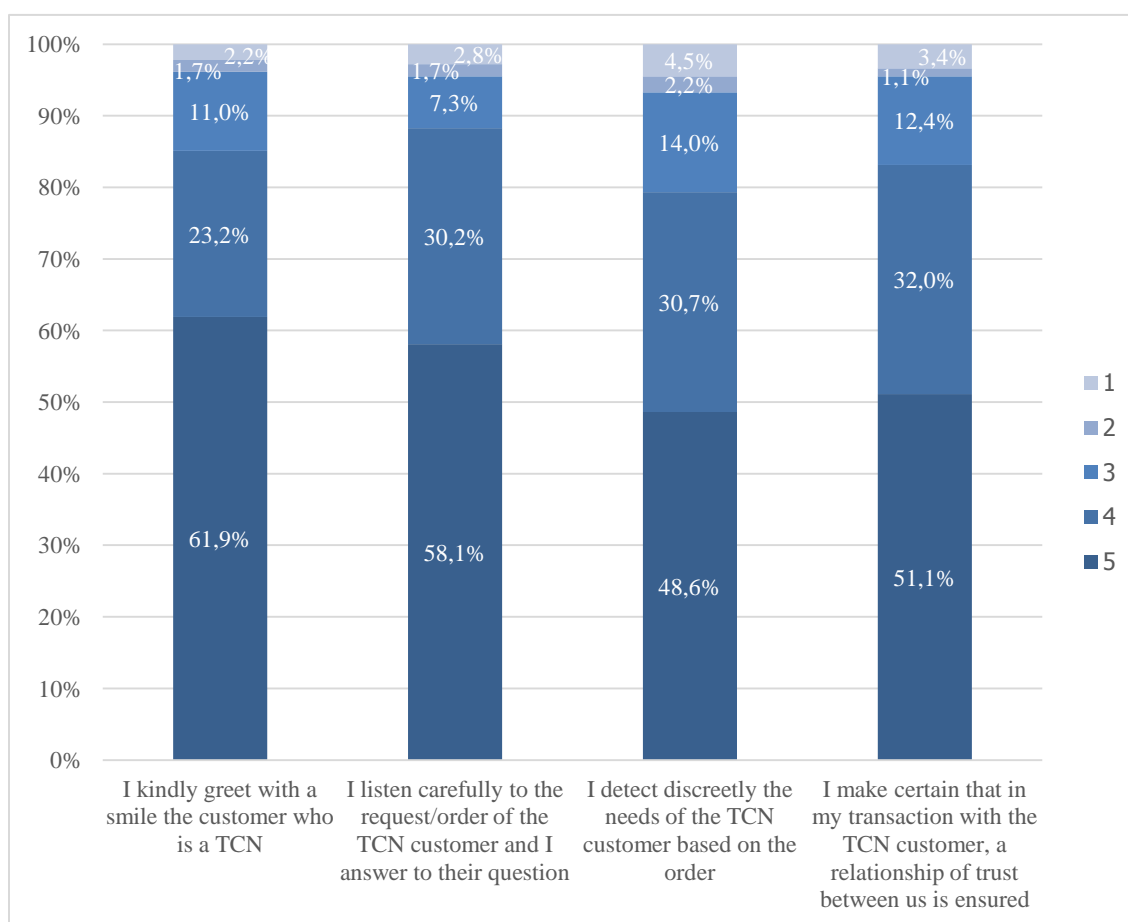


During the provision of service, the majority of employees (61,9%) completely agree that they kindly greet with a smile the customer who is a TCN while only 2,2% of them certainly disagree. Similarly, nearly six in ten employees (58,1%) definitely agree in listening carefully to the request/order of the TCN customer and answer their question and merely 2,8% absolutely disagree.

As for detecting discreetly the needs of the TCN customer based on the order, plenty of employees (48,6%) totally agree and just 4,5% of them absolutely disagree.

Over a half of them (51,1%) unquestionably agree in regard to making certain that in their transaction with the TCN customer, a relationship of trust between them is ensured. On the other hand, only 3,4% of employees stated their definite disagreement.

Figure 6.2: Select the appropriate rating for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes from your personal experience (Where 1 means absolutely disagree and 5 means absolutely agree)



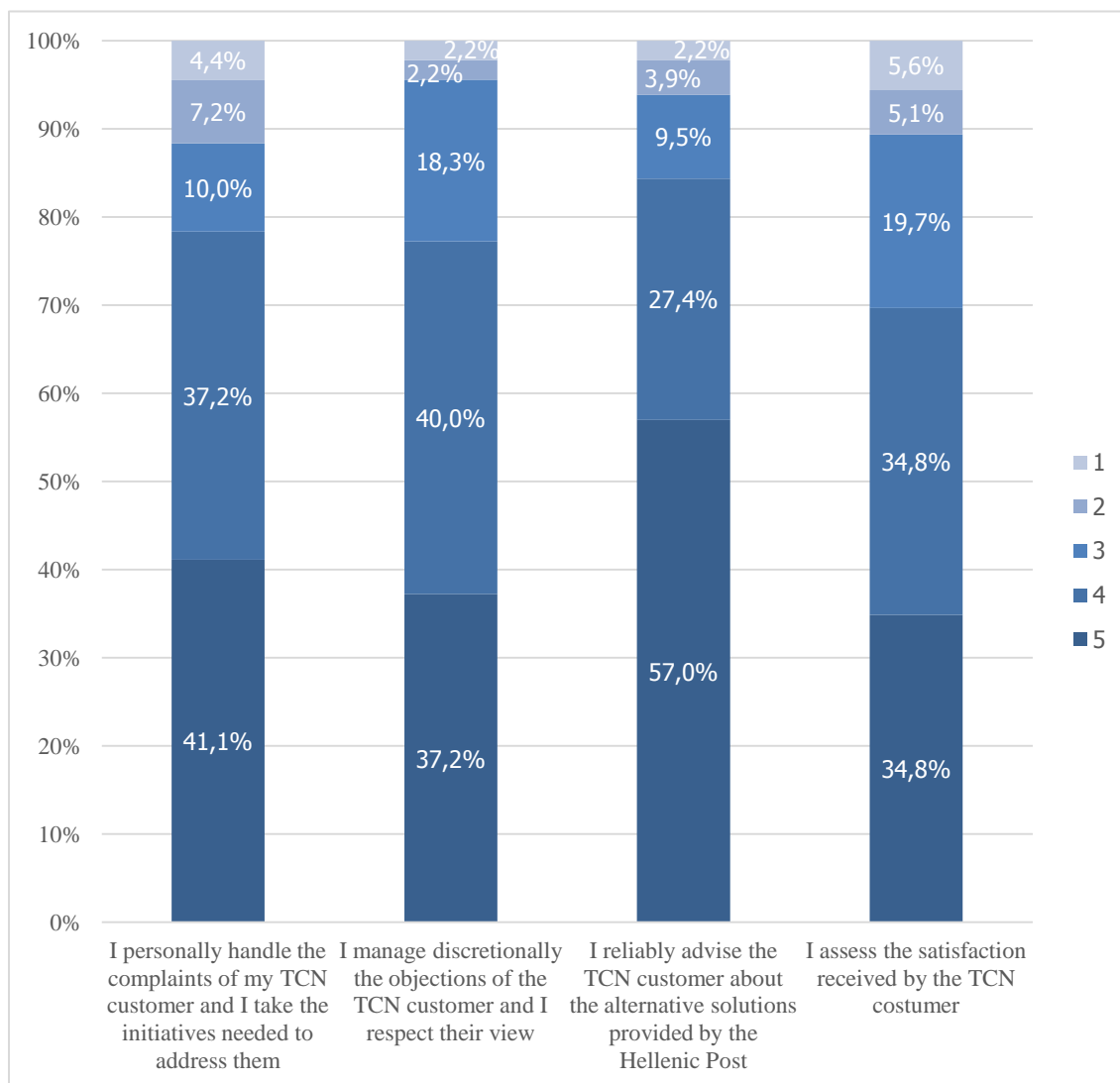
In the exchange of words with the TCN customer, over four in ten employees expressed (41,1%) absolute agreement in personally handling the complaints of their TCN customers and that they take the initiatives needed to address them and merely 4,4% certainly disagree.

In a similar manner, many employees (40%) rated their agreement on a grade of 3 while 37,2% of them absolutely agree at managing discretionally the objections of the TCN customer and that they respect their view. Only 2,2% undoubtedly disagree.

Furthermore, nearly six in ten employees (57%) completely agree that they reliably advise the TCN customer about the alternative solutions provided by the Hellenic Post and on the other hand, just 2,2% of them absolutely disagree.

As for assessing the satisfaction received by the TCN customer, over a third of employees certainly agree (34,8%) while another same amount (34,8%) rated their agreement at a grade of 4. Only 5,6% of employees unquestionably disagree.

Figure 6.3: Select the appropriate rating for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes from your personal experience (Where 1 means absolutely disagree and 5 means absolutely agree)

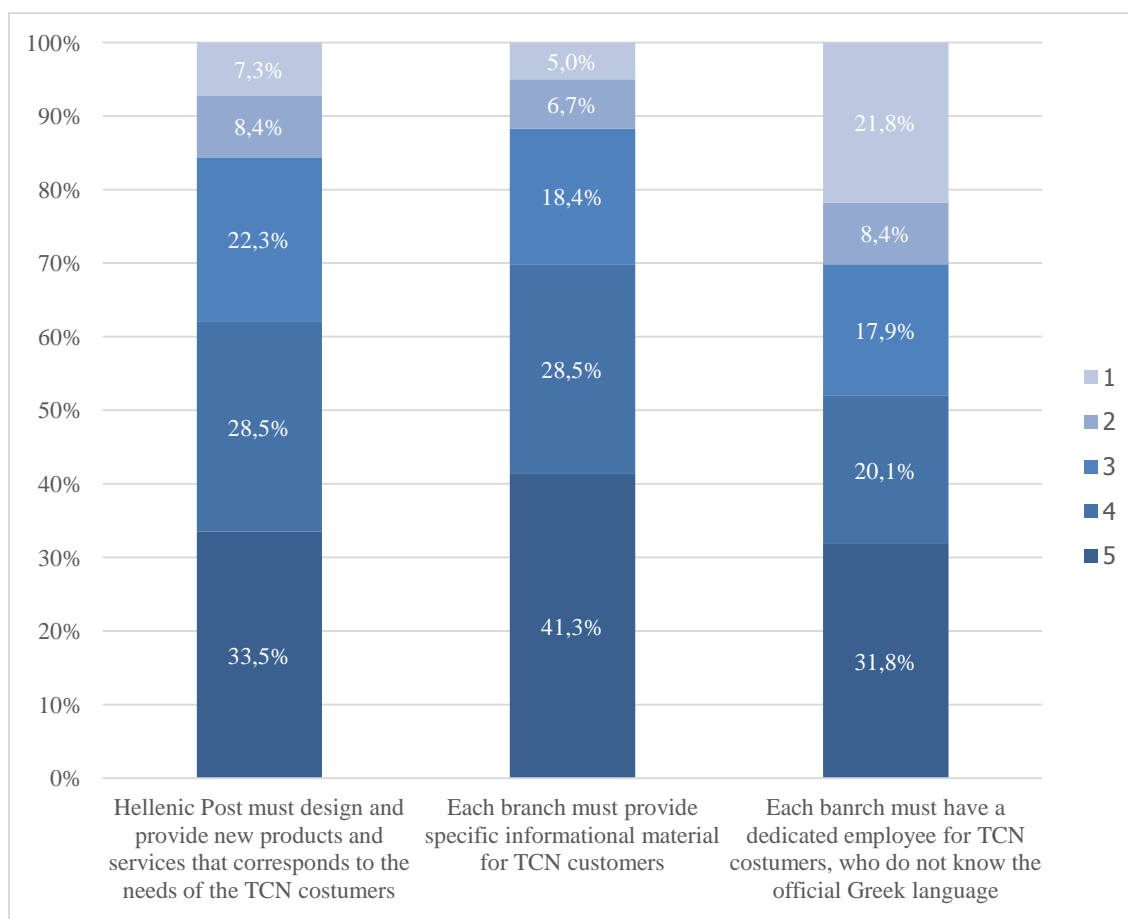


Regarding new additions to the Hellenic Post, over a third of employees (33,5%) definitely agree that it must design and provide new products and services that correspond to the need of the TCN customers while 7,3% of them certainly disagree.

In addition, plenty of employees (41,3%) stated their absolute agreement that each branch must provide specific informational material for the TCN customers and just 5% undoubtedly disagree.

Another 21,8% of employees stated their complete disagreement in regard to each branch must have a dedicated employee for TCN costumers, who do not know the official Greek language. On the other hand, nearly a third of employees (31,8%) absolutely agree.

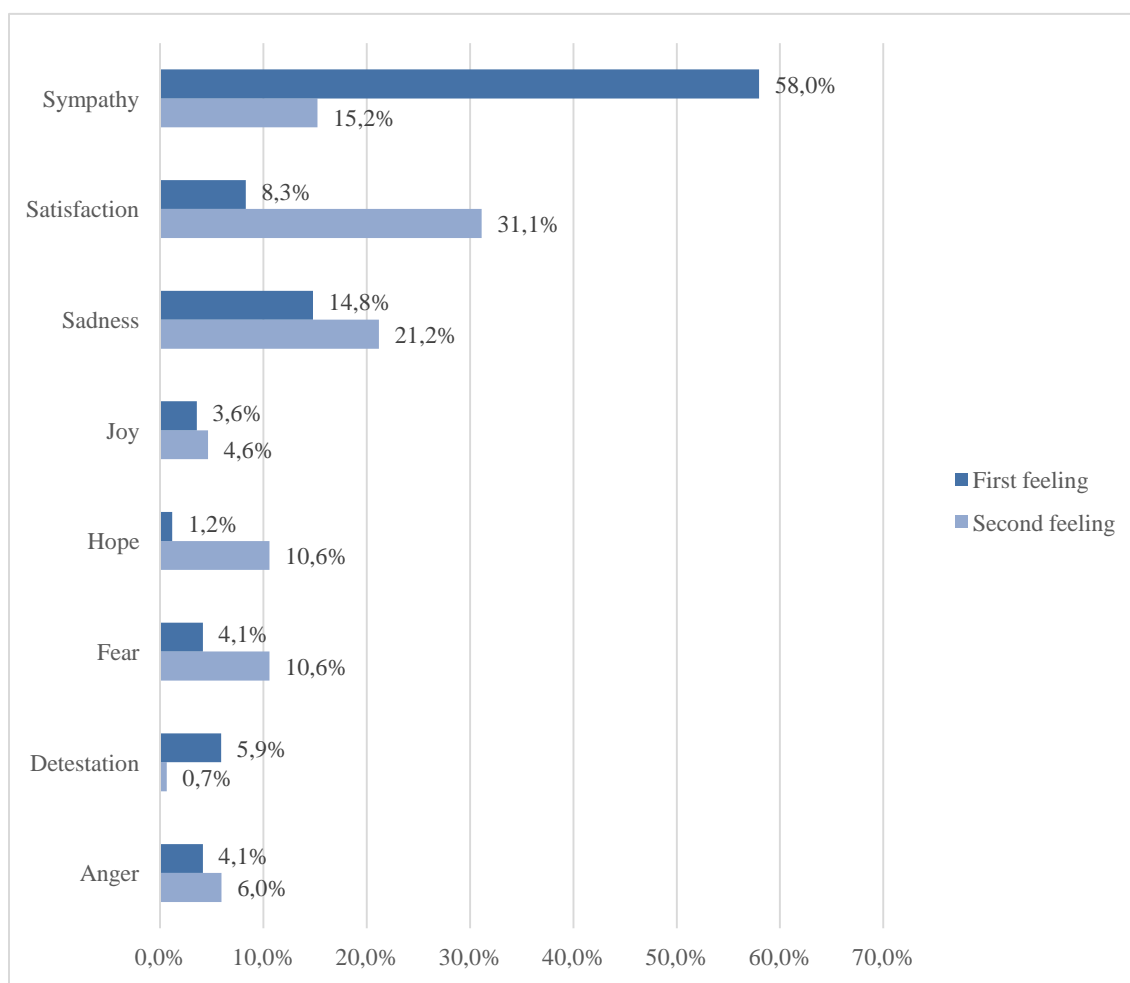
Figure 6.4: Select the appropriate rating for each statement according to the degree of agreement / disagreement, as it comes from your personal experience (Where 1 means Absolutely disagree and 5 means absolutely agree)



The employees have a variety of feelings during the service but most of them experience positive ones. The first feeling the majority of the employees experience is sympathy (58%), followed by sadness (14,8%) and 8,3% of employees experience satisfaction. Another 5,9% feel detestation and as for anger and fear, they respectively reach 4,1% of employees. On the other hand, 3,6% experience joy and only 1,2% of employees feel hope.

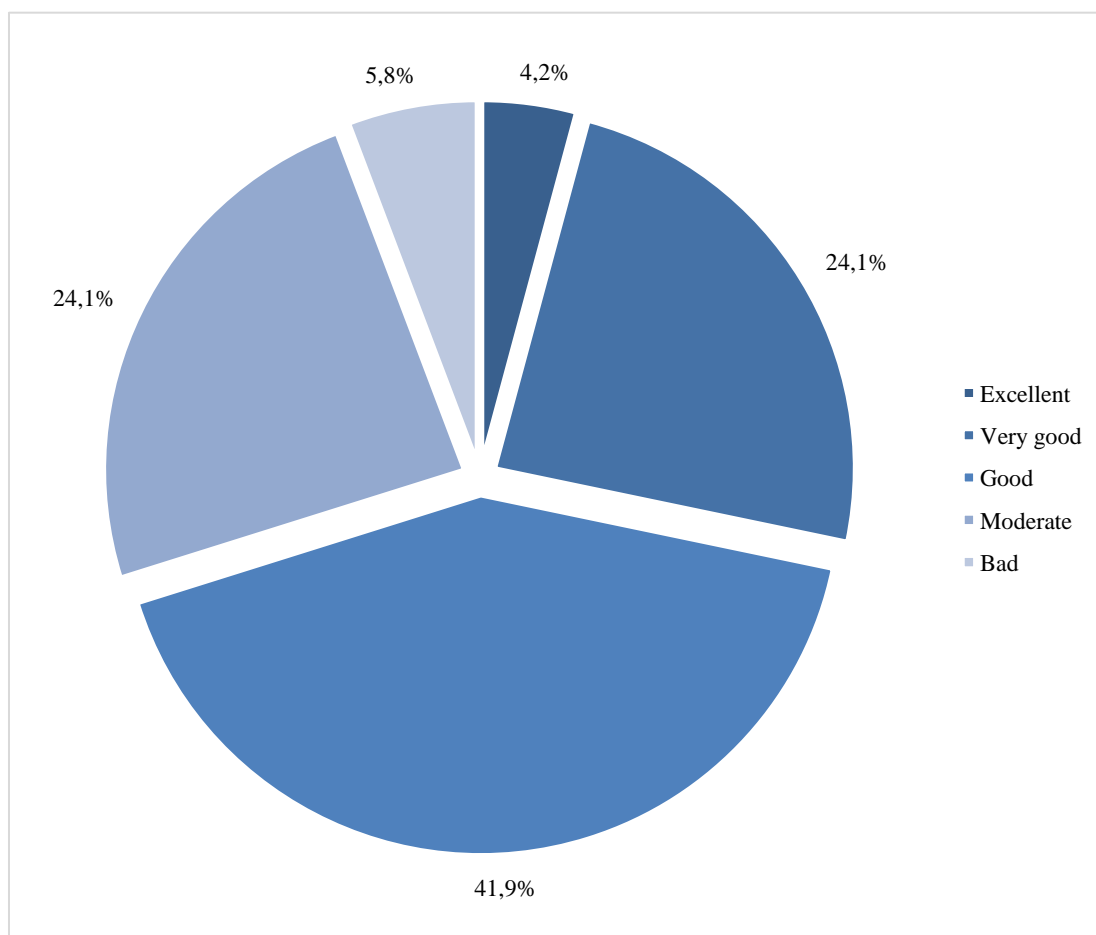
Following the first feeling, nearly one in three employees feel satisfaction (31,1%) and 21,2% experience sadness, followed by sympathy (15,2%). Over one in ten feel fear (10,6%) which also applies to hope (10,6%). Another 6% experience anger, 4,6% of employees feel joy and only 0,7% experience detestation.

Figure 7: Which of the following feelings would you say is more frequent while serving TCN costumers?



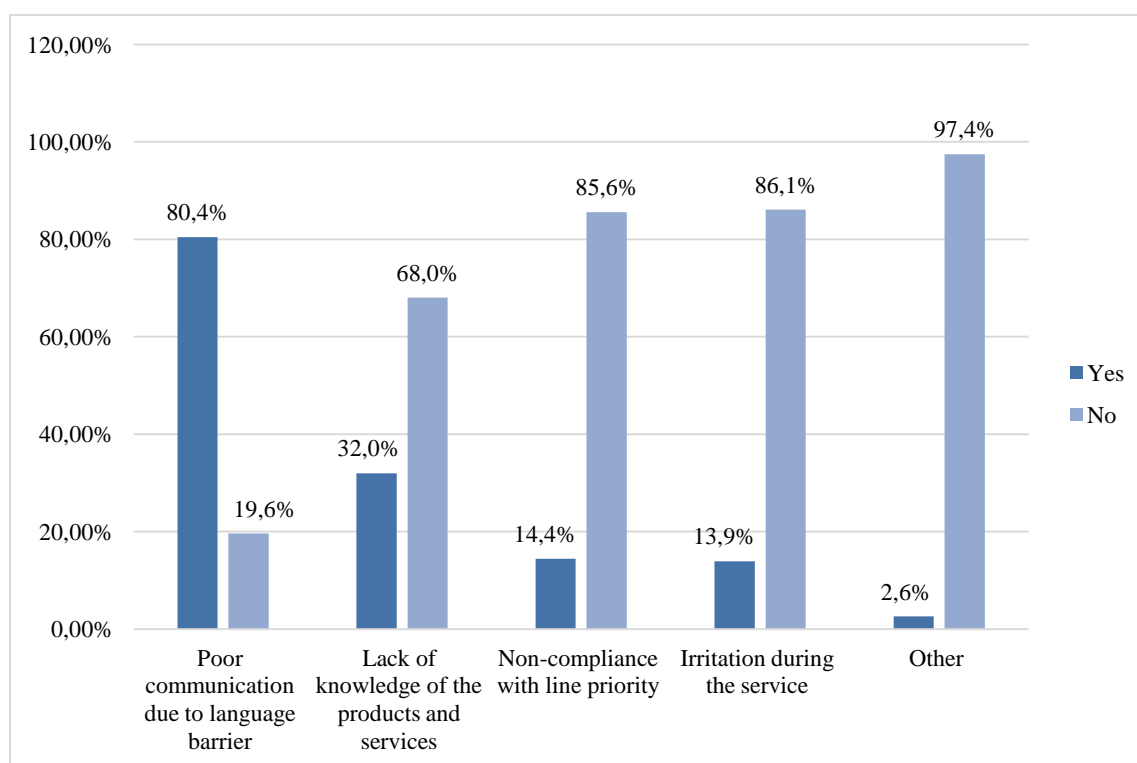
The total of transactions with TCN customers is in general positively evaluated. Over one in four employees (41,9%) give a rating of good, followed by an evaluation of very good by nearly a quarter of employees (24,1%). Another same amount (24,1%) rates the total of transactions at a moderate level. Only 4,2% of employees consider the transactions excellent while on the other hand, 5,8% see them as bad.

Figure 8: How would you generally evaluate the total of transactions with TCN customers?



Diverse problems arise during the TCN customer service, thus a relevant list was created. From the said list, the vast majority of employees (80,4%) consider poor communication due to language barrier to be a main problem. Nearly a third of employees (32%) see the lack of knowledge of the products and services as a main problem as well. As for non-compliance with line priority, it is considered one of the main difficulties by 14,4% of the employees. Similarly, 13,9% consider irritation during the service a main difficulty too. Only 2,6% of the employees believe there are other main problems.

Figure 9: Which do you consider to be the main problems / main difficulties you face while serving a TCN customer? (select everything that applies)



As for the other main problems/main difficulties, a total of 5 employees noted different answers with a variety of opinions.

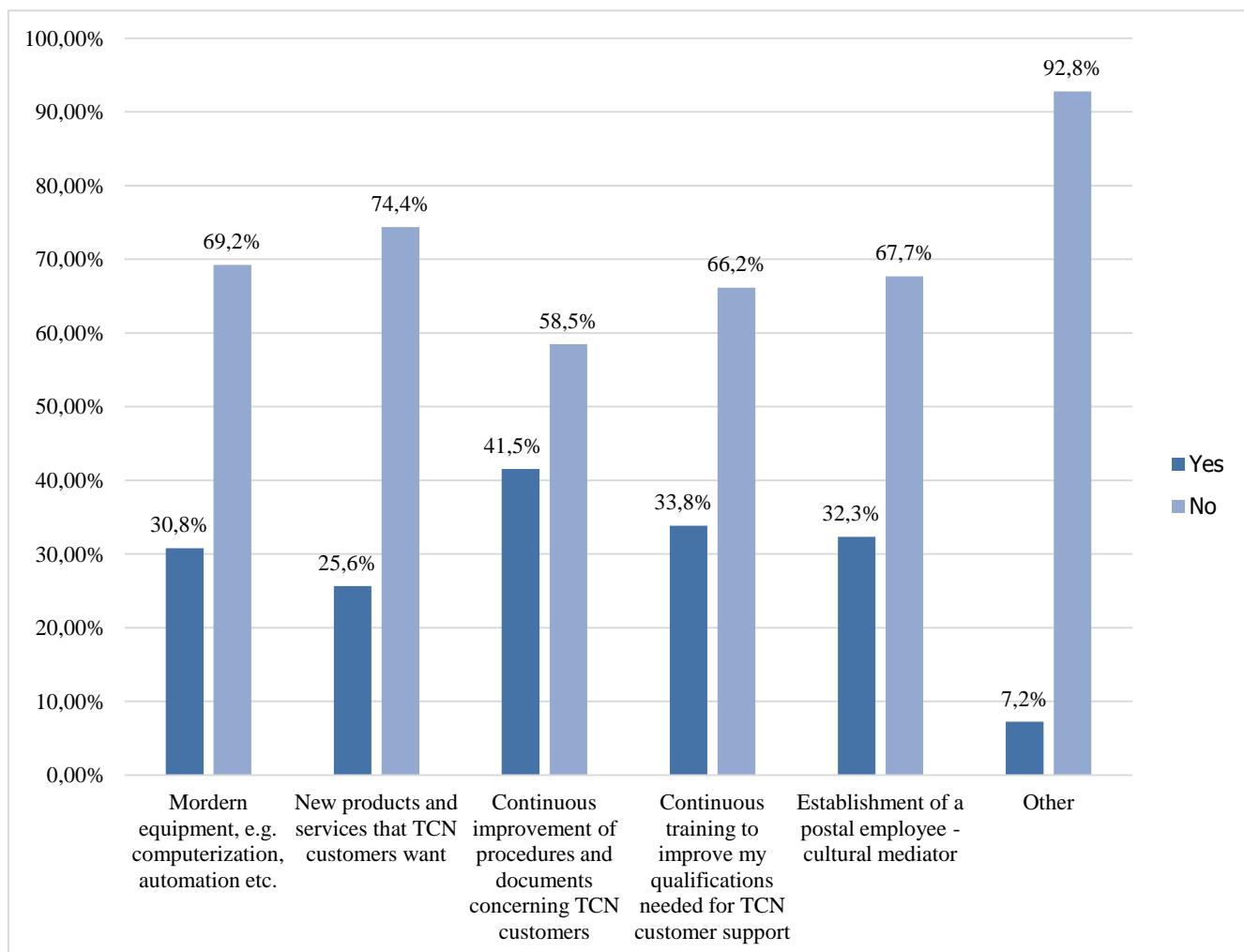
Table 5: Other main problems / main difficulties

		Bad smell	Cultural differences	Customer audacity	No residence	Service delay	Total
Employees	N	1	1	1	1	1	5
	Percentage	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%

In order to better TCN customer support, there are different kind of options that could contribute to the improvement. Nearly a third of employees (30,8%) consider modern equipment helpful in such a feat. A larger proportion of them (41,5%) believe that continuous improvement of procedures and documents concerning TCN customers could deliver positive results. Over one in four employees (25,6%) thinks of new products and services that TCN customers want capable of helping as well. Another third of employees (33,8%) find continuous training to improve their qualifications needed for TCN customer support as a useful measure and 32,3% of employees consider the establishment of a postal employee – cultural mediator helpful. Only 7,2% noted other answers.

Figure 10: What do you believe could help improve the TCN customer support? (select everything that applies)

Regarding other potential improvements which were filled by the employees, a total of 10 additional suggestions were stated by 13 employees but 3 of them are outside the capabilities of Hellenic Post (Allow free movement: 1, State concern for fine TCN integration: 1, TCN equal treatment: 1) and 3 employees stated the service is on a good level already (Flawless service: 2, Good enough service: 1). Similarly, 3 employees suggested nothing and another employee stated



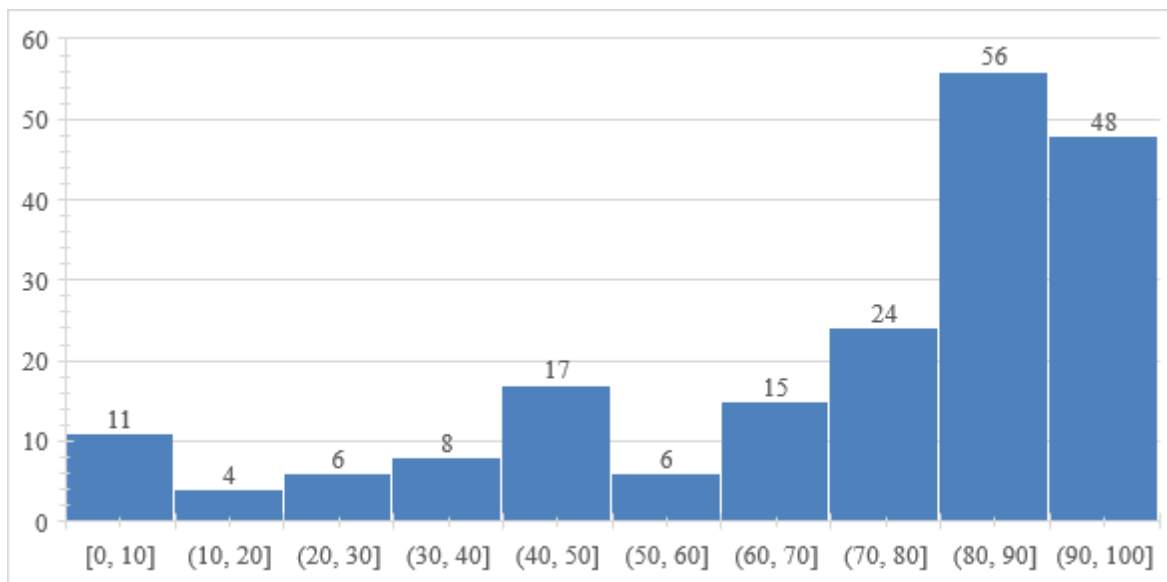
they find it unlikely to find a way of improvement because they cannot communicate with the TCN customers due to the customer's lack of knowledge in English.

Table 6: Other potential improvements

	Employees	
	N	Percentage
Allow free movement	1	7,7%
Employee English Knowledge	1	7,7%
Flawless service	2	15,4%
Good enough service	1	7,7%
Internet translator	1	7,7%
Marketing screen for products and services	1	7,7%
Non probable solution due to customers not knowing English	1	7,7%
None	3	23%
State concern for fine TCN integration	1	7,7%
TCN equal treatment	1	7,7%
Total	13	100

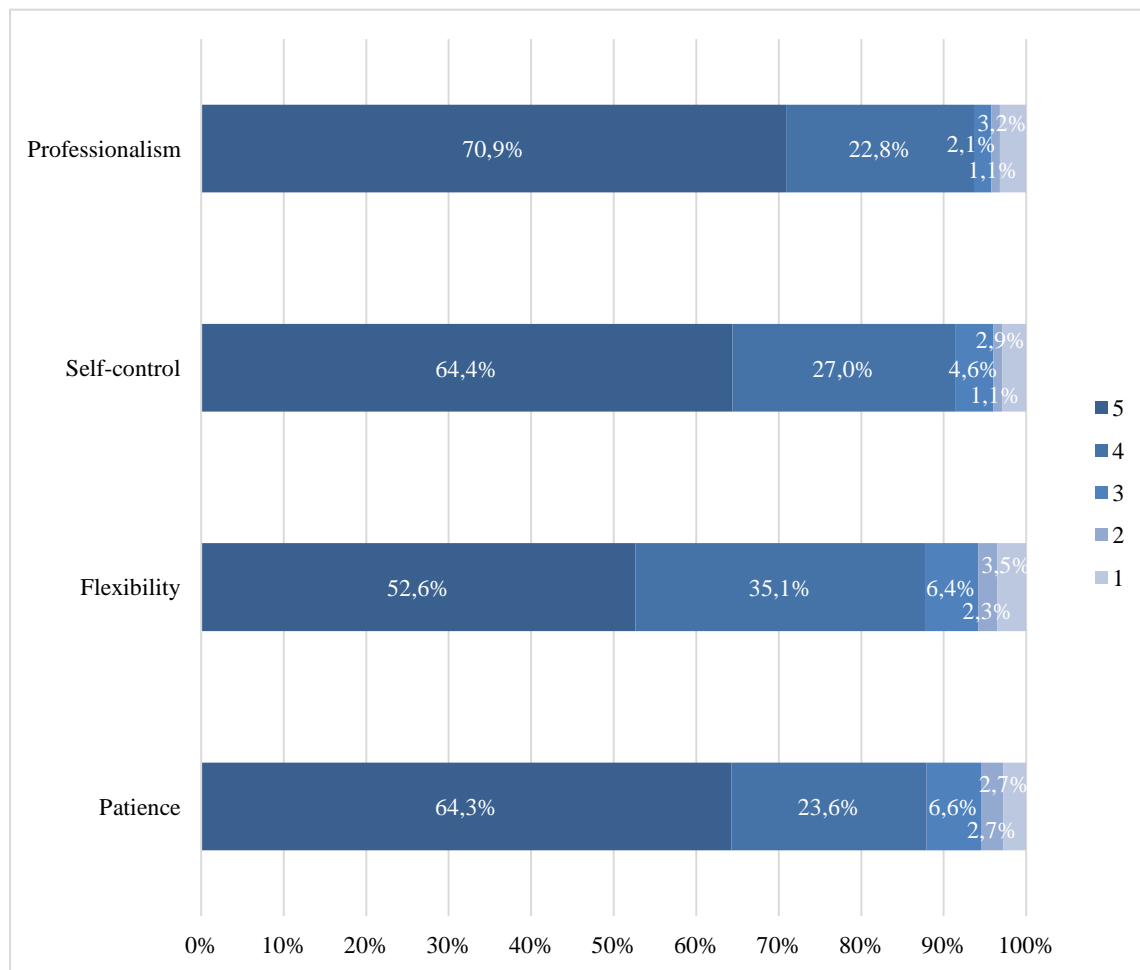
The average possibility of an employee offering their help towards another employee in order to solve a problem during a transaction with a TCN customer would be 75,13 while the median and mode would be 90 each. As for the standard deviation, it takes up the value of 27,29. Furthermore, it can be noted the distribution is left skewed while no outliers could be observed. In conclusion, it is pretty likely for an employee to offer their help to a colleague in need.

Figure 11: What would be the possibility of offering your help towards a colleague in order to solve a problem between the transaction with a TCN customer ? (On a scale from 0 which means absolutely unlikely to 100 which means absolutely likely)



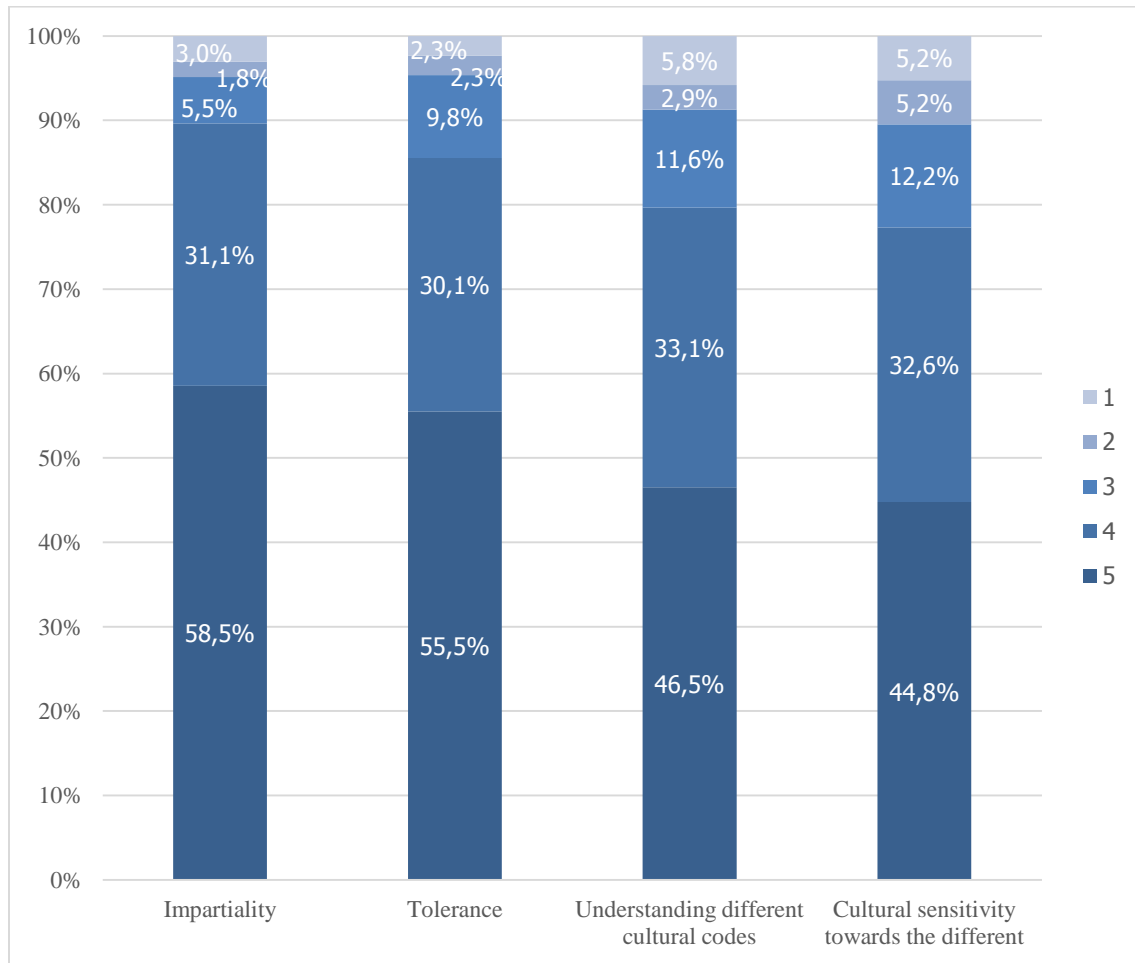
Regarding the list containing skills and features that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator, most of the employees responded positively about the importance of those features in their service towards TCN customers. More particularly, in the case of their mental capability, more than seven in ten believe professionalism is of absolute importance (70,9%), followed by self-control (64,4%) and patience (64,3%). As for flexibility, more than half (52,6%) of the employees think it is undoubtedly important.

Figure 12.1: How important do you think these skills and features (that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator) could be in your service towards TCN customers? (Where 1 stands for Not important and 5 stands for Absolutely important)



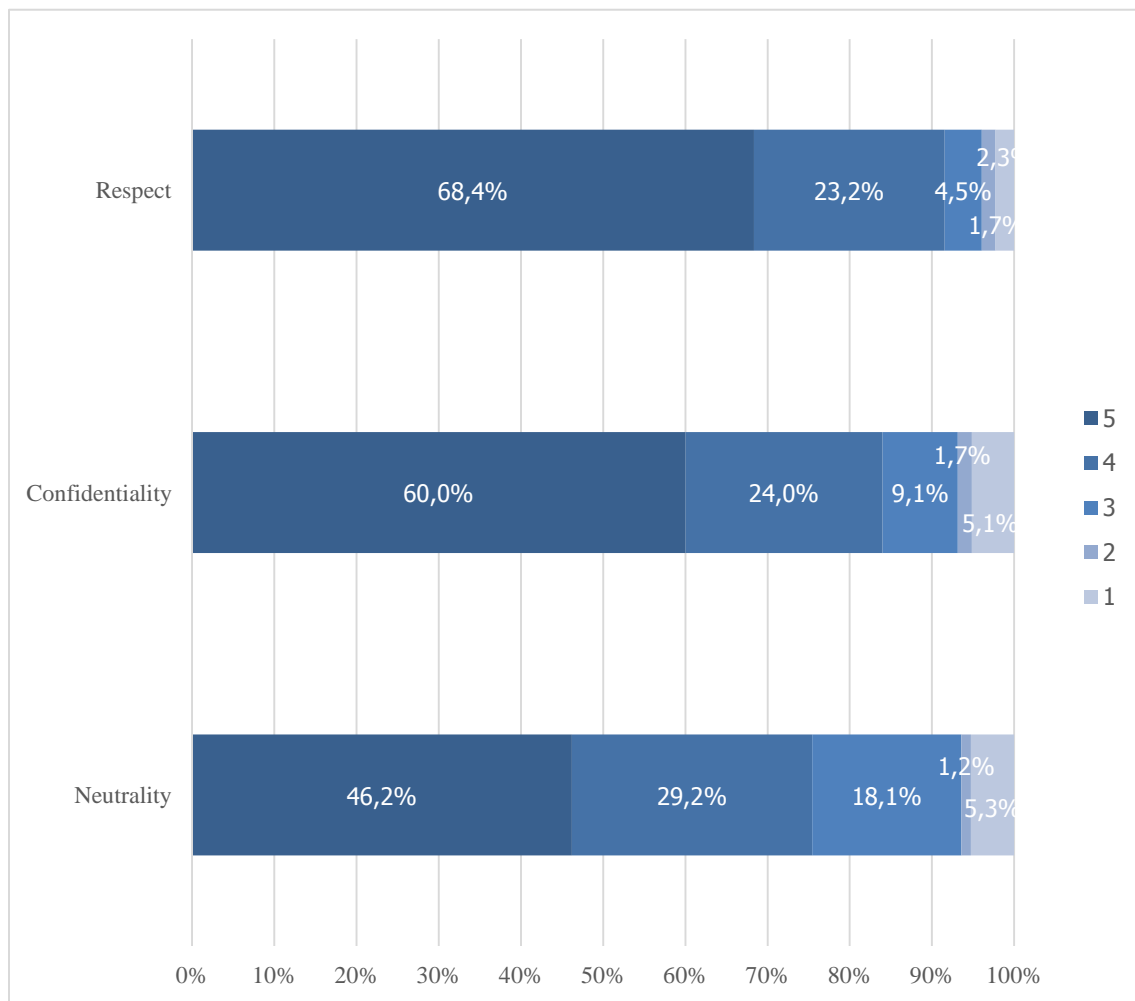
In addition, concerning the relevant features when contacting different origins and cultures, nearly six in ten believe impartiality (58,5%) is of utter importance, followed by tolerance (55,5%). Understanding different cultural codes is seen as definitely important as well by plenty of employees (46,5%) while 44,8% believe in the absolute importance of cultural sensitivity towards the different.

Figure 12.2: How important do you think these skills and features (that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator) could be in your service towards TCN customers? (Where 1 stands for Not important and 5 stands for Absolutely important)



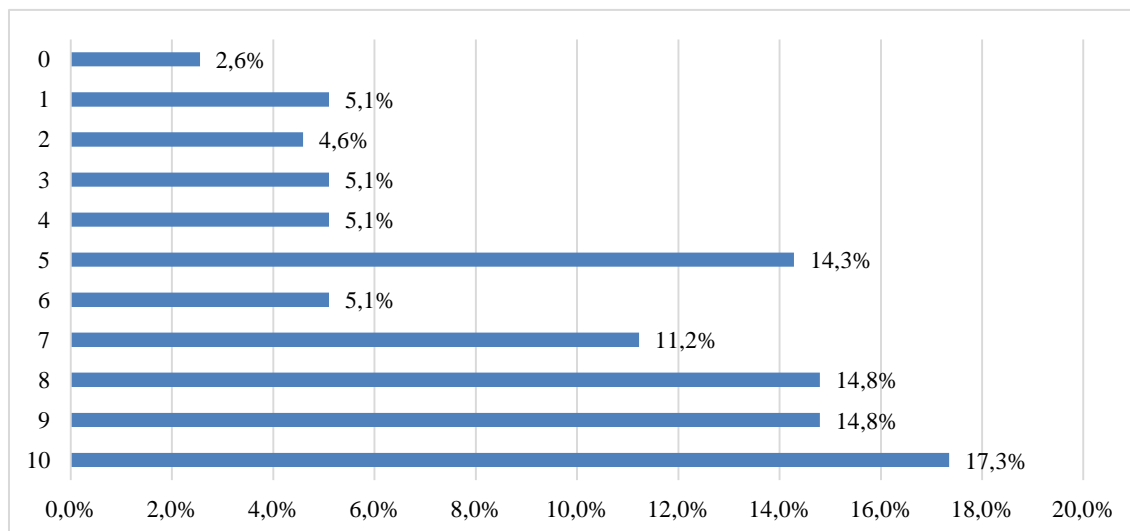
As for the treatment towards TCN customers, the majority of employees think of respect (68,4%) as undoubtedly important while six in ten see confidentiality (60%) just as important. As for neutrality, 46,2% of the employees believe in its utmost importance.

Figure 12.3: How important do you think these skills and features (that could be proved useful for a cultural mediator) could be in your service towards TCN customers? (Where 1 stands for Not important and 5 stands for Absolutely important)



Considering the fact that employees in their current job position can perform as cultural mediators between an organization such as the Hellenic Post and a TCN customer, the satisfaction they would feel when performing that role during a transaction tends to be on a high level for most of the employees. More particularly, over six in ten employees (63,2%) would be satisfied on a level over the grade of 5 while 17,3% would feel absolute satisfaction. Another 14,3% would feel satisfaction at a grade of 5. On the other hand, more than one in five (22,5%) would be satisfied on a level below the grade of 5 while only 2,6% would experience no satisfaction at all.

Figure 13: How satisfied would you be as a cultural mediator (between the Hellenic Post and a TCN customer) during a transaction in your current job position? (Where 0 stands

for No satisfaction and 10 stands for Absolute satisfaction)

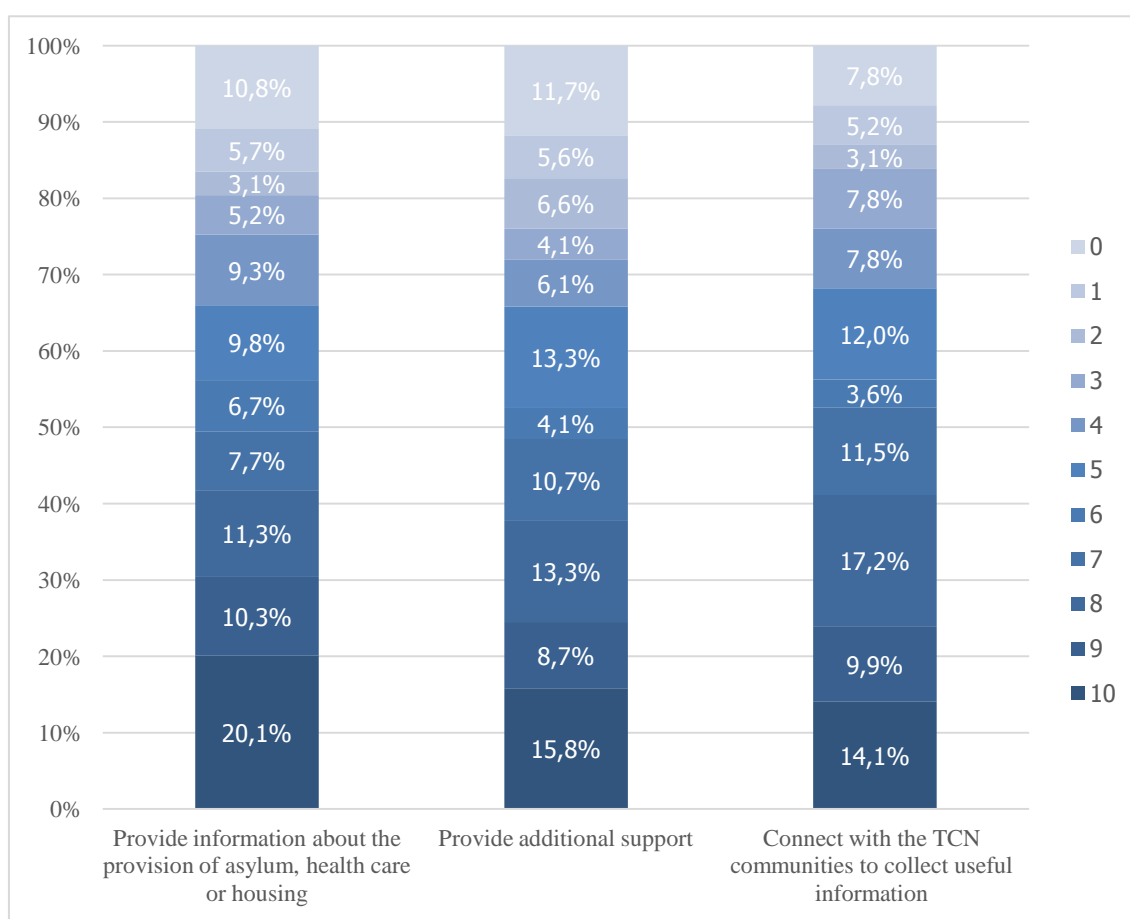
Taking into account the opinion of the employees in matters of usefulness, the response consisted mainly of positive answers. More particularly, in the case of providing additional information and support as well as connecting with the TCN communities, over half the employees (56,1%) think of knowing and providing general information to TCN customers regarding the provision of asylums, health care or housing useful on a level over the grade of 5 while 20.1% consider it absolutely useful. On the other hand, 34.1% of the employees believe its usefulness to be below the grade of 5 while 10,8% do not consider it useful at all. The rest of the employees (9,8%) consider the level of usefulness at a grade of 5.

Similarly, providing additional support apart from providing general information is seen over the grade of 5 in terms of usefulness by most of the employees (52,6%) while 15,8% consider it thoroughly useful. Another 13,3% consider it at the grade of 5. Over a third (34,1%) of employees believe of it to be below the grade of 5 in terms of usefulness and 11,7% do not see it at all as useful.

As for connecting with the TCN communities in order to collect information about TCNs and the Hellenic Post for the purpose of improving the service provided to them, nearly half the employees (46,3%) consider its usefulness on a level over the grade of 5 while 14,1% believe it is utterly useful. Only 7,8% believe of it of not useful at all and over one in ten employees (12%)

see its usefulness on a grade of 5 while 31,7% consider the level of usefulness below the grade of 5.

Figure 14.1: How useful do you think it would be to: Know and provide general information to TCN customers regarding the provision of asylum, health care or housing? / Provide additional support apart from providing general information? / Connect with the TCN communities in order to collect useful information about TCNs and the Hellenic Post for the purpose of improving the service provided to them? (Where 0 stands for Not useful and 10 stands for Absolutely useful)



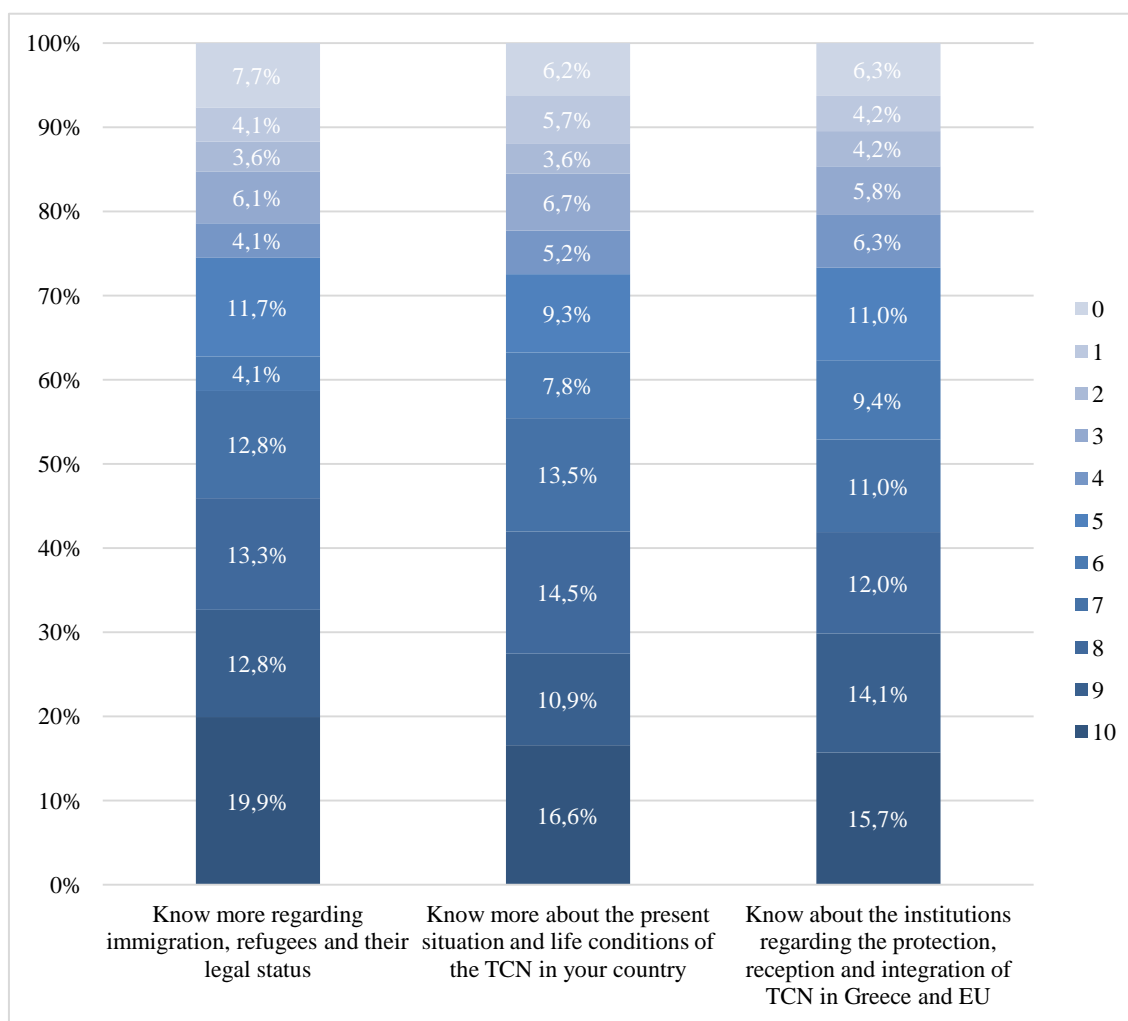
Regarding the case of employee's knowledge on topics revolving around TCNs, nearly one in five employees (19,9%) think of knowing more in regard to immigration, refugees and their legal status as undoubtedly useful while the majority (62,9%) consider the level of usefulness over the grade of 5. Another 11,7% believe it to be on the grade of 5. On the other hand, over a quarter of

employees (25,6%) think of it being useful below the grade of 5 and only 7,7% consider it not useful at all.

In addition, to know more about the present situation and living conditions of the TCN in their country is seen in terms of usefulness over the grade of 5 by over six in ten employees (63,3%) and 16,6% consider it certainly useful. In contrast, only 6,2% do not believe of it at all as useful and 27,4% see its usefulness below the grade of 5. The rest of the employees (9,3%) consider it to be on the grade of 5.

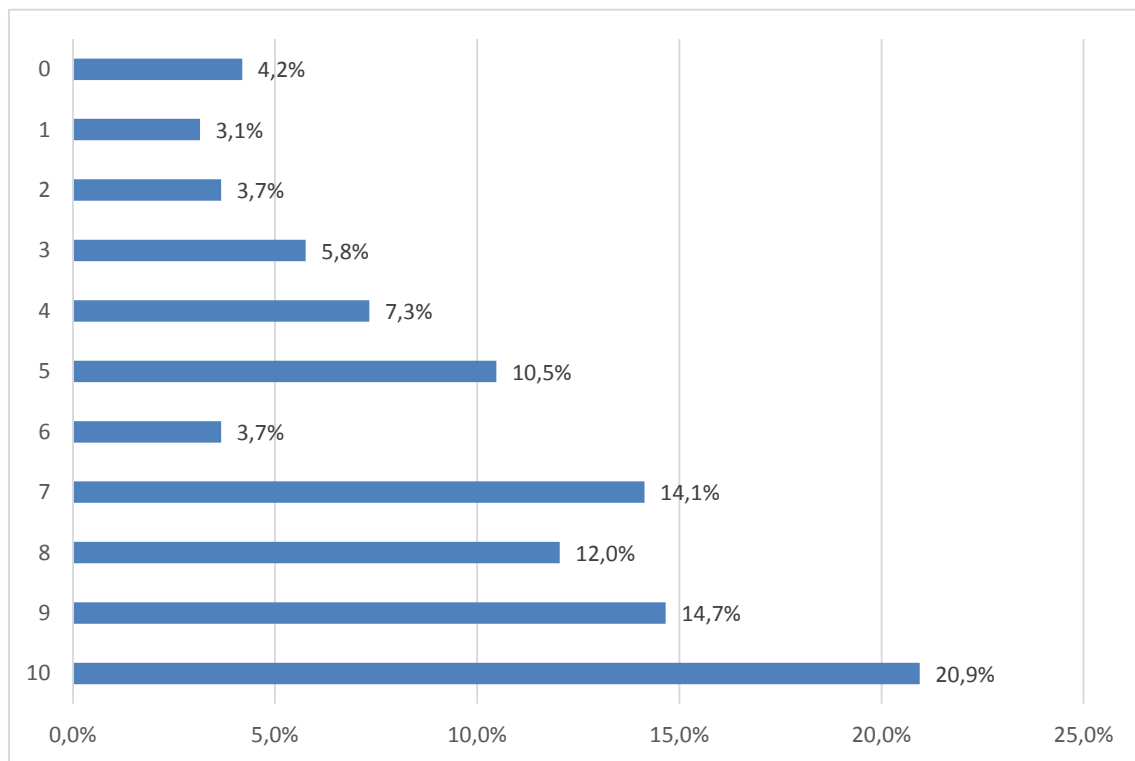
As for knowledge regarding the institutions about the protection, reception, and integration of TCN in Greece and the EU, it is seen of utmost usefulness by 15,7% of the employees while the majority (62,2%) think of it being useful over the grade of 5. Over one in ten (11%) of employees believe it belongs to a grade of 5 in terms of usefulness and only 6,3% consider it not useful at all. Meanwhile, over a quarter of employees (26,8%) think of its usefulness below the grade of 5.

Figure 14.2: How useful do you think it would be, as an employee in the postal sector, to know more: Regarding immigration, refugees and their legal status? / About the present situation and living conditions of the TCN in your country? / About the institutions regarding the protection, reception, and integration of TCN in Greece and the EU? (Where 0 stands for Not useful and 10 stands for Absolutely useful)



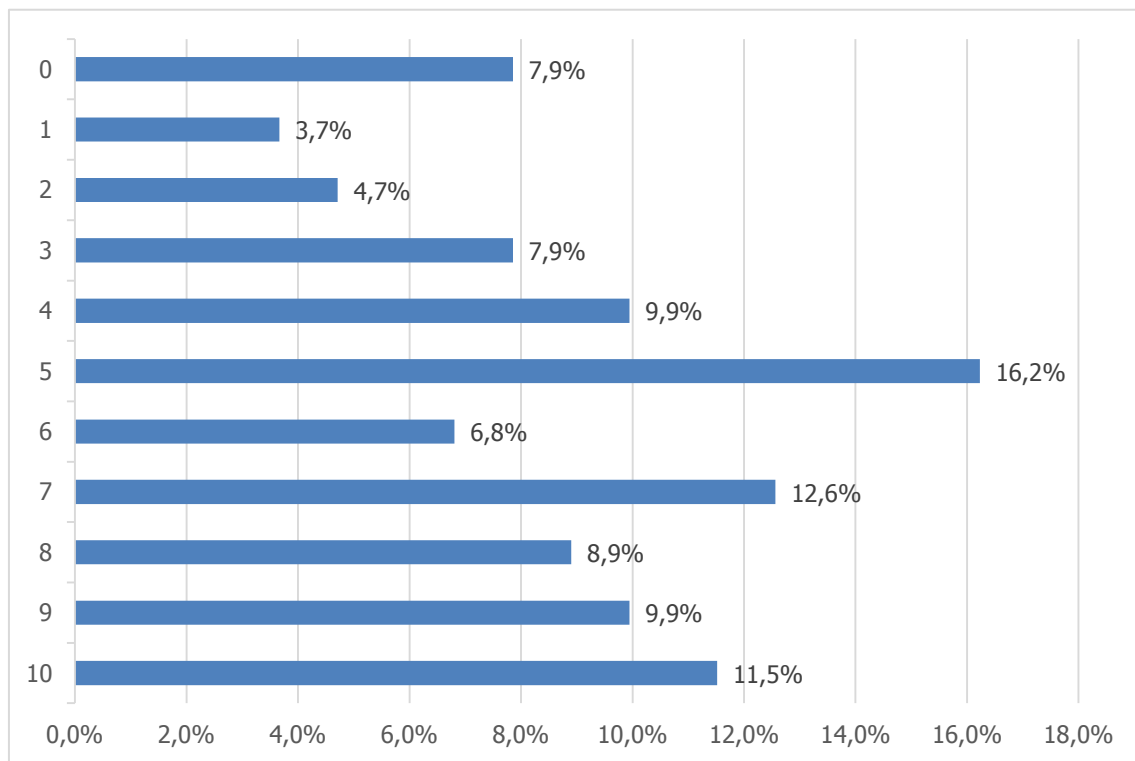
Similarly, in order to acquire a better understanding of the cultural particularities and diversities, over one in five employees (20,9%) consider it absolutely useful to have at their disposal a set of instructions and practices for transactions with TCN customers while the majority (65,4%) believe of its usefulness over the grade of 5. Another 10,5% consider it on the grade of 5 in terms of usefulness and almost a quarter of employees (24,1%) believe it belongs to a grade lower than 5. Only 4,2% think of it as not useful at all.

Figure 14.3: How useful do you think it would be, as an employee in the postal sector, to Have at your disposal, a set of instructions and practices for the transactions with TCN customers in order to get a better understanding of the cultural particularities and diversities? (Where 0 stands for Not useful and 10 stands for Absolutely useful)



The topics revolving around the feasibility of an employee acting in a certain way in various situations received mostly positive responses as well. An employee, in the present circumstances, to be able to handle the mental pressure and / or the conflicting climate around the issue of TCN is seen as absolutely feasible by 11,5% of the employees while nearly half of them (49,7%) consider its feasibility over the grade of 5. On the other hand, 34,1% think of it below the grade of 5 while 7,9% believe it is not feasible at all. Another 16,2% of employees consider its feasibility on the grade of 5.

Figure 15.1: How feasible do you think it is in the present circumstances for an employee at the postal sector to be able to manage the mental pressure and / or the conflicting climate around the issue of TCN? (Where 0 stands for Not feasible and 10 stands for Absolutely feasible)

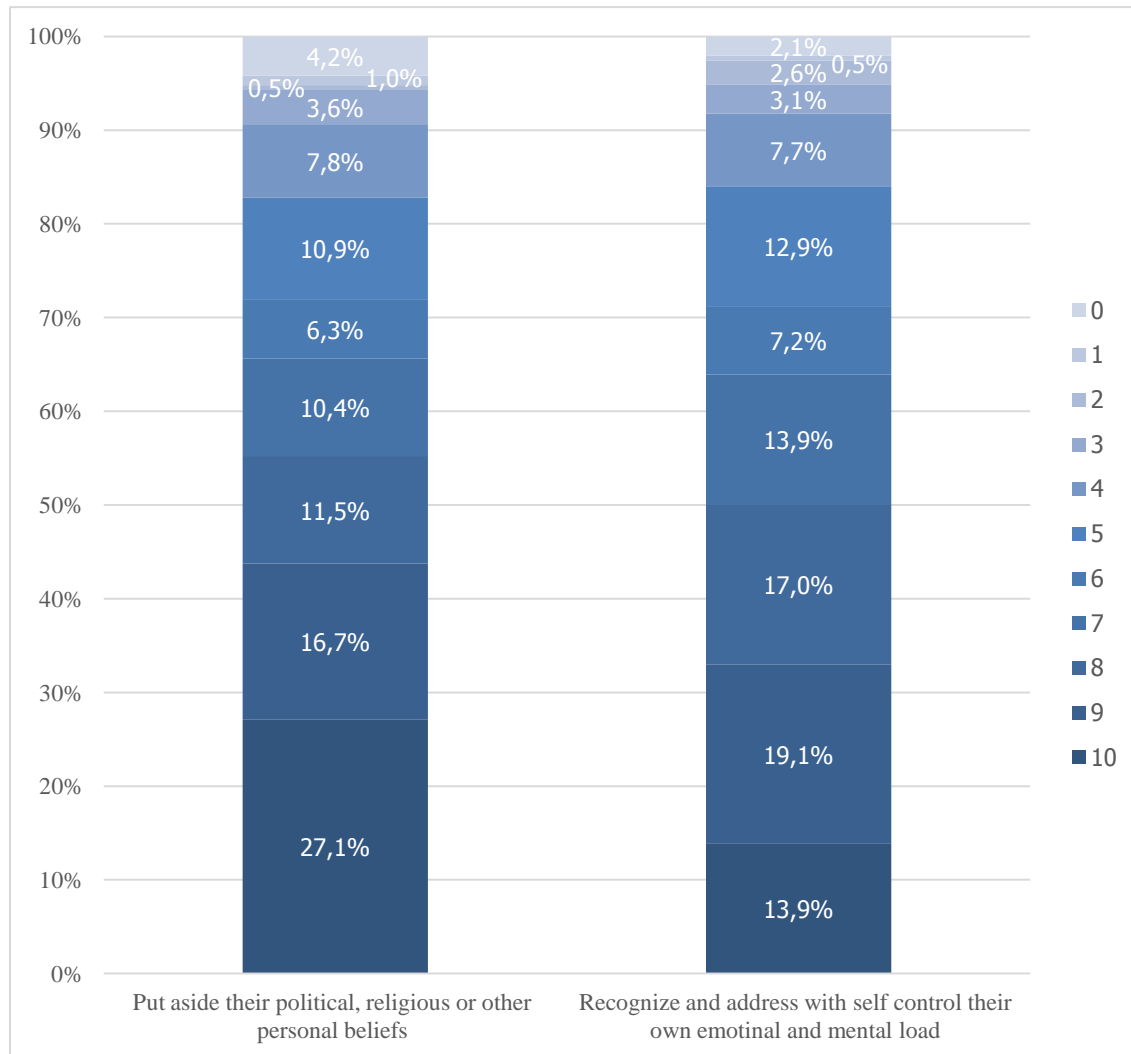


During a transaction with a TCN customer, in the case of the employee's self-control, over a quarter of employees (27,1%) believe it is absolutely feasible to put aside their political, religious or other personal beliefs and only 4,2% consider it not feasible at all. Over one in ten (10,9%) employees think of its feasibility on a grade of 5 while the majority (72%) consider the level of feasibility over the grade of 5. On the other hand, 17,1% of employees believe its feasibility belongs below the grade of 5.

Similarly, over seven in ten employees (71,1%) think it is feasible over the grade of 5 for an employee to recognize and address with self-control their own emotional and mental load while 13,9% consider it definitely feasible. In contrast, only 2,1% of the employees believe it is not feasible and 16% see its feasibility below the grade of 5. Another 12,9% of employees think the level of feasibility to be on the grade of 5.

Figure 15.2: How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector during a transaction with a TCN customer to: Put aside their political, religious or other personal

beliefs? / Recognize and address with self-control their own emotional and mental load?
(Where 0 stands for Not feasible and 10 stands for Absolutely feasible)



As for the case of customer response, more particularly the feasibility for an employee to provide instructions and advice only if and when requested is rated over the grade of 5 by nearly seven in ten (69%) employees while 14,9% consider it entirely feasible. Below the grade of 5 in terms of feasibility is seen by 17% of the employees and let it be noted no employee gave a rating of a grade of 1. Another 13,9% thinks of it at the grade of 5 while only 2,6% believe it is not feasible. In addition, it is considered by over one in ten employees (10,4%) as absolutely feasible for an employee to personalize the customer's situation and respond accordingly. On the other hand, only 3,6% do not consider it feasible and 17,6% of employees rate its feasibility at a grade of 5.

Nearly a quarter of the employees (24,4%) think of the level of feasibility below the grade of 5 while the majority (58%) considers it over that grade.

Figure 15.3: How feasible do you think it is for an employee at the postal sector during a transaction with a TCN customer to: Provide instructions and advice only if and when requested? / Personalize the customer's situation and respond accordingly? (Where 0 stands for Not feasible and 10 stands for Absolutely feasible)

