



## Psychiatric group warns of surge in Greek suicides

ATHENS, Greece

The number of suicides in Greece is likely to increase significantly in 2010, mainly due to the country's financial crisis, a state-funded mental health charity said Friday. Officials from the Klimaka group said the number of calls received at its suicide prevention hot line had tripled since the beginning of the year, adding that unofficial data gathered by the organization suggest that the number of suicides is expected to be twice the last recorded official number -- 366 deaths in 2008.

Official figures for 2010 will be released by the country's National Statistics Authority next year.

The group's director, psychiatrist Kyriakos Katsodoros, also said there was a sharp rise in demand for its psychiatric counseling services and food banks for the homeless.

"The number of calls has tripled... We were receiving about five to eight calls per day (last year). Now we have 15 to 35 calls," Katsodoros told The Associated Press, referring to calls made to the hot line that were considered serious.

"The trend is getting worse. From the figures that we have gathered this year, we are seeing that the suicide rate has doubled."

Speaking from the organization's walk-in clinic, in a rundown area in central Athens, Katsodoros also warned of a rise in homelessness since the crisis began.

"There is a new category that we are witnessing: they are generally from a middle-income background and are often educated. We have not seen this before."

Katsodoros said most suicides are attributed to a combination of factors, but that staff operating the prevention hot line had reported a "clear increase" in economic concerns expressed by callers, including mounting personal debt and unemployment. Greece's Socialist government has slashed payrolls and benefits this year to deal with a debt crisis that brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy in May.

Painful reforms agreed before Greece began receiving international rescue loans -- worth euro110 billion over three years -- have deepened the country's recession and led to a rash of store closures in city centers, with unemployment hitting 12 percent in May. Klimaka employs 170 staff and receives most of its funding from the government. It operates the country's only national suicide prevention hot line, as well as homeless shelters, free medical clinics and psychiatric assistance clinics in Athens and other parts of Greece. It also helps train counselors in Iraq, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

By DEREK GATOPOULOS  
Article from The Associated Press

# Glory of the Greek language

**"Greek is the first language in the world. The Greek language is not only alive in Greece, but has a second life; its alphabet, vocabulary, syntax and literature are present in all languages."**

Greece is not currently popular in European financial circles. But two new books on the Greek language, and the introduction of Ancient Greek as a subject in schools in a pilot project in the UK, indicate that its language and culture are still admired and appreciated around the world.

The country's yawning deficit - Greece spends 12.7% more than it earns - and crippling debt burden of EUR300 billion (US\$413.6 billion) have brought it to its knees.

But England, France and Spain, among other countries, still pay tribute to the glory that was Greece with help from academics, educational schemes and publications.

The Greek language and culture spread across more than 35 centuries, providing an unbroken link between modern day Greeks and their illustrious ancestors. Unlike the more widely taught Latin, Greek is a living language currently spoken by more than 11 million people in mainland Greece and by several million Greeks spread across the world.

Philologist Francisco Rodriguez Adrados of Madrid's Complutense University, and a member of the Royal Spanish Academy, recently published the seventh volume of his Spanish Dictionary of the Ancient Greek Language.

Speaking to colleagues during a presentation of the dictionary at the Greek Academy last month, Adrados said: "Greek is not a dead language. We must all realise that Greek and Chinese are the only languages spoken today whose origin was known more than 3,500 years ago."

Adrados acknowledges the role of languages of the ancient world such as Egyptian, Sumerian, Hebrew and Arabic. But if judged on the influence exerted over other European languages, he said: "Greek is the first language in the world. The Greek



language is not only alive in Greece, but has a second life; its alphabet, vocabulary, syntax and literature are present in all languages."

The Spanish scholar has concluded that Greek developed during the final phase of the Indo-European distribution and insists that it should be studied in order to discover what changed the language into an important tool of cultural development.

Adrados, who also wrote History of the Greek Language: From its origins to the present day, is very specific about changes that have taken place through the centuries and claims there has been a great deal of misunderstanding.

"There has been development, but if we compare the various Greek languages such as the Mycenaean, Homeric and Greek as spoken today, the differences are not so important. The vowels have been simplified, the musical tone improved, the morphology has been reduced, but the basic categories and the basic vocabulary remain the same."

French philologist Jacqueline de Romilly's Petites leçons sur le grec ancien, which she wrote with Monique Trudi, was also published recently under the title Greek Lessons.

The book contains a great deal which is already known, yet the way it is written gives readers the opportunity to check their knowledge and

simultaneously either confirm or reject certain truths or misconceptions. Greek Lessons also gives readers the chance to wander through the many changes that, instead of distorting the language, have expanded and enriched it.

From the first chapter the two French philhellènes refer to the "curious vitality of a dead language" and stress the importance of teaching Ancient Greek in schools. They also point out that "without a single conquest and without a single unifying political organisation behind it, the Greek language and civilisation managed to spread east and west, succeeding in providing a political unification throughout the ancient world".

Moreover, the authors disclose the secrets of the language related to philosophy, psychology and sociology, and also reveal comparisons with the French language, recognising influences, loans and even original words that have been adopted by French.

With the Greek state unable to offer substantial support to ancient and modern Greek studies in a number of universities, which are threatened by severe financial pressure, efforts in other countries such as England, Spain and France have become all the more important for the continuing survival, development and expansion of the Greek language.

David Holton, professor of Modern Greek at Cambridge University, who is fighting to keep his department going, is far from a lone voice.

More than a dozen primary schools will be teaching Ancient Greek from September this year in Oxfordshire, UK, as part of a pilot scheme to promote the classics among students.

Lorna Robinson, director of the Iris educational project, who for several years has been teaching an introductory extra-curricular one-hour lesson every other week in a city park to children and adults, is confident that Greek can prove very popular with pupils and could also have substantial knock-on benefits across the curriculum.

"Ancient Greek is just a wonderful language full of beautiful words and fascinating concepts. Initially, people can be daunted at the idea of learning a language with a different alphabet, but we've actually found that while it adds an extra dimension to the learning, people take to it quite quickly and really enjoy it once they get going," says Robinson. Under the scheme just over 150 pupils in three Oxford primary schools will be given Greek lessons from September and a further 10 schools will get one-off taster sessions.

By Makki Marseilles  
Article from the University World News

## The results of the Certificate of Attainment in Greek

The results of the Exams of the Certificate of Attainment in Greek were announced the 10th August 2010. This certificate is the official qualification of the Greek State that certifies the attainment of the Greek as a foreign language in 4 levels, from A to D. The success percentage was 80%. In the A and B levels all the 8 candidates succeeded. In the C level the 9 out of 11 succeeded and in the D level, 7 out of 11. A ceremony for the conferment of the titles will take place in September, in the General Consulate of Greece in Sydney. The General Consul congratulates the successful candidates and the Education Consul Mr. Pitsas and his collaborators Mrs. Tentzerakis, Mrs. Batagianni and Mrs. Amditi for the successful realization of this examination and their support of a very important institution for the Greek language.