

# Migration in Greece Developments in 2010

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Professor Anna Triandafyllidou

Senior Fellow  
Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)  
and  
Part-time Professor  
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies  
European University Institute

(with the assistance of Michaela Maroufouf)

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## 1. Introduction

Greece has not been hit particularly hard by the global economic recession that started in 2008. Actually the effects of the recession and the internal acute crisis of public finances became visible only in late 2009. The Greek crisis is less connected to the global financial recession and more to structural problems of the Greek economy (low productivity, low competitiveness), the segmentation of the Greek labour market and a public debt that has skyrocketed during the last years.

The drastic austerity measures adopted by the Greek government in spring 2010, imposed to a large extent to Greece by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund have included horizontal cuts in the salaries of public employees, increases in both direct and indirect taxes, cuts in public expenses including for instance the abolition of certain semi-public bodies and agencies and the reduction of certain types of welfare allowances. In parallel the government has introduced important changes in the national welfare and pension system, increasing the age of retirement and abolishing a large number of exceptions to the general regime, including those aimed at mothers with children who previously could retire much earlier. Further cuts in social services and welfare provisions are actually expected in the coming months as well as structural changes such as the liberalisation of all the closed professions (transport, lawyers, chemists, butchers, notaries, auditors) and of the energy market.

The crisis and the measures taken to reduce the public debt and re-organise the state finances have had both a material and a psychological effect on the Greek market. Consumption has decreased dramatically hitting hard the retail and overall trade sector as well as leisure services such as tourism and catering. Households have reduced their expenditure for vacation or eating out and have postponed or indeed cancelled any plans for the purchase of more durable goods (e.g. electric appliances, cars, but also of course the purchase of a home). For some the reason has been that they can no longer afford it, for others it was a precautionary measure, to save money and wait to see how the situation will develop in the near future. Banks have become extremely careful in giving loans to customers by fear that they will fail to repay them.

The crisis has led to an increase in unemployment rates, which in October 2010 climbed at 13.5%. However, the crisis has hit hardest the economic sectors where immigrants are largely employed. Construction in particular has been receding already in 2008-2009 as a result of the global recession but currently has reached a stalemate. The estate market is in crisis and constructors are not developing new housing projects. At the same time public works have been stopped or reduced in size, some have been postponed for the future.

These developments have hit hardest migrant men and women who belong to the most vulnerable section of workers in Greece. The impact of the crisis on migrant workers is multi-faceted and largely intertwined with the systemic features of migration in Greece. The legal stay status of migrants and their families in Greece is particularly precarious as for the first 10 years of their stay they have continuously (every 1 or 2 years – when they renew their stay permit) to prove that they are employed, and have been insured. This is a condition that is becoming increasingly difficult to fulfil because jobs available in sectors such as construction, transport, catering or tourism are more often than previously without a proper contract, highly unstable and without welfare payments.

This of course risks becoming a vicious circle because if a migration cannot renew her/his stay permit they fall back into illegality and are then unable to get a legal job. Journalistic reports<sup>1</sup> and preliminary qualitative research evidence<sup>2</sup> suggests that several Albanians have returned to Albania in search of better employment prospects there or in the effort to let the financial storm pass and return when job prospects are better.

Thus while legal migration appears to be decreasing as people leave for their country of origin and/or disappear from statistics because they fall into irregular status, irregular migration from Asia and Africa via the Greek Turkish borders continues unabated (Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2010). Actually, there has been a shift in recent months of the irregular migration traffic as people are now smuggled predominantly from the Evros river area, on the northeastern part of the Greek Turkish land border, while the crossing from the Izmir coasts to the Greek islands in the Aegean, has been to a certain extent abandoned by migrant smuggling networks.

The ways in which the crisis affects migrants and their families and the strategies that migrant workers adopt to face this difficult period are closely related to how migration has been integrated into the Greek social and economic system. Since Greece has not so far developed a credible policy for managing legal migration inflows, most immigrants in Greece have arrived undocumented, found employment in the informal labour market and later regularised through an amnesty programme. Still to this day the only category of migrant workers that arrive legally in Greece are seasonal agricultural workers.

The procedure of ‘inviting’ a foreign worker for medium-term (not seasonal) jobs is too slow and too complicated for employers or foreigners to follow it. The matching of demand and offer is usually made through the migration networks which include both migrants and natives. The acquisition and renewal of a legal stay permit comes usually after a period of actual socio-economic integration of the irregular migrant through the labour market. It is for this reason perhaps that the current increase in unemployment and the acute crisis of specific labour market sectors risks to create disproportionate hardship to migrant families as often the entire family’s legal status depends on the (male) breadwinner even though the spouse usually works in the cleaning, caring or catering sector but often without a proper contract and without health insurance.

The first comprehensive law on migration was passed by the Greek Parliament in 2001 (about a decade after massive immigration to Greece had started) and included both migration management and migrant integration measures. A new bill was passed in 2005 with a view to simplifying the management (issuing and renewal) of stay permits, incorporating the *acquis communautaire* in the areas of family reunification and long term residence status. That bill did not however significantly alter the main approach towards economic migration which is one of reactive measures that try to cure past problems rather than plan for the future. At the same time integration has remained low in the policy agenda both because it was not a priority for the then conservative government and because there were no funds available for it. By contrast during the last 5 years there has been increasing media and policy attention on irregular migration and the need to

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<sup>1</sup> Kathimerini 25 July 2010, available at:  
[http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w\\_articles\\_ell\\_1\\_25/07/2010\\_409263](http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w_articles_ell_1_25/07/2010_409263)

<sup>2</sup> METOIKOS project on circular and return migration between Greece and Albania, see  
<http://metoikos.eui.eu>

control it. Thus, resources have been directed in 2007 to the border guard service. However, irregular migration challenges, important though they are since Greece is one of Europe's most exposed external borders, have not been addressed by a comprehensive approach that would motivate actively transit and origin countries to cooperate with Greece and that would prevent domestic employers from exploiting irregular migrant workers.

Further amendments to the 2005 law were passed in February 2007 mainly with the aim to streamlining the processing of applications for the renewal of stay permits and for allowing migrants who had been previously legal and who had in the meantime lost their status because they could not prove that they were employed (they had no welfare stamps certifying formally their working days) to regain their legal migration status.

Most recently, with the arrival in power of the Socialist government in October 2009, there has been a major shift in the migrant integration and citizenship policies as a new bill was passed in March 2010 which has significantly facilitated the naturalisation of first and second generation immigrants and has also introduced local and regional political rights for third country nationals who live in Greece for 5 years or more. This law has represented a breakthrough in the Greek migrant policy.

By contrast, much needed changes in the asylum system (which in the case of Greece is particularly inadequate and closely related to the overall management of the borders) and in the management of economic migration have not yet been introduced.

It is in this social and economic context that this paper seeks to present the size and main features of the immigrant population in Greece, discuss their insertion into the Greek labour market and also critically review previous and most recent developments in migration management and migrant integration policies. The report is divided into 3 main sections. Section 2 below presents an overview of the migrant stock in Greece and their socio-demographic features. Section 3 reviews their labour market insertion, including a short analysis of each nationality group. Section 4 critically reviews recent developments in migration policy in Greece.

## **2. Immigration in Greece**

The migration balance started becoming positive for Greece during the 1970s, due to return migration, but immigration started growing as well in the early 1980s, after a small number of Africans, Asians and Poles settled in Greece and started working in construction, agriculture and domestic services. However, their overall number was considerably low (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004). The 1991 population census registered 167,000 foreigners in Greece out of a total resident population of 10.3 million (that is, slightly above 1 %).

After the collapse of the Central Eastern European communist regimes in 1989 however, migration to Greece, especially from neighbouring countries such as Albania and Bulgaria, rose dramatically. Soon thereafter, during the first half of the 1990s, migration flows became massive including hundreds of thousands of co-ethnics from the former Soviet Republics and from Albania.

Greece's transition to a country of immigration is closely linked to the overall geopolitical changes in Europe and in the Balkan region, the collapse of Communism and

the dismantling of labour markets and welfare regimes in Central and southeastern Europe, which created a massive emigration wave to other European countries. The geographic position of the country at the fringes of the EU (then EEC), its economic growth during the 1980s and a result of Greece's accession to the European Economic Communities (EEC) in 1981, and, finally, the rise in living standards and educational level of native youth who started refusing seasonal jobs or work in the informal economy and who waited, instead, for jobs that would match their qualifications and/or be of better pay and higher status, created a pool of work available for migrants.

This, in turn, led to a demand for a work force ready to fill these job vacancies, in the lower end of the occupational scale (Kasimis & Kassimi 2004). In addition, immigrants responded to a demographic deficit experienced by rural areas connected with emigration from those areas (Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2005: 107). Thus, major push factors from abroad combined with internal developments in the Greek economy and labour market to produce a dramatic change<sup>3</sup> in Greece's demography, society and economy.

## **2.1 The Size of the Immigrant Population**

According to the last census of the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), that took place in 2001,<sup>4</sup> there were 797,091 foreign residents in Greece including both those with a legal and with an irregular stay status. Of those, 750,000 were citizens from outside the EU-15 countries. Apart from the national census, statistics on migration in Greece are incomplete as there are no data on in- and out-flows. The National Statistical Services provides for an estimate of the total resident population as well as the total migrant population based on the Labour Force Survey, however the LFS sampling has important limitations as regards its representativity of the migrant population. In particular it does not cover populations such as live-in workers and generally under-represents small population groups.

The main source of data on legally staying immigrants in Greece is the stay permit database of the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen (former Ministry of Interior). The process of renewal of stay permits for third country nationals in Greece is characterised by long delays (the processing of a renewal may take between 3 and 12 months while the permit is of a one or 2-year duration). Thus at any given point in time there is a large number of permits that is in the process of renewal. These permits thus do not appear in the database as valid stay permits creating unavoidably a 'hidden' migrant population that is in limbo (for several months) between legal and irregular status. For this reasons, instead of using the number of valid permits on 31<sup>st</sup> December of 2009, as our point of reference as regards the legal migrant population, we have chosen to refer to the total number of permits that have been valid at least for 1 day during 2009 as an estimate of the total legal migrant population in Greece (overlooking thus whether the

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<sup>3</sup> Naturally, once migration started, further elements came into play, including the role of migrant informal networks, the role of human smuggling organisations, and a demand for an additional labour force that was generated by the very existence of plentiful and cheap unskilled or semi-skilled migrant labour. These issues are discussed in section 4 below.

<sup>44</sup> A new census is planned for March 2011.

migrant is in possession of her/his permit or whether they are in the process of renewing it – naturally this method overlooks the fact that some renewal requests may be rejected or some migrants may not apply for a renewal because they have left the country). Table 2.1.1 thus provides an estimate of the legal migrant stock in Greece during the last three years.

**Table 2.1.1 Estimate of the legal migrant stock in Greece, 2007-2009**

Year	Permits in validity at least for 1 day during the year
2007	620,019
2008	650,818
2009	636,258

In order to provide for an estimate of the total migrant (including co-ethnics / *ομογενείς*) population (see table 2.1.2 below) residing in Greece we combine different sources: the Labour Force Survey (4<sup>th</sup> trimester 2009); the data on co ethnics from the former Soviet Union (Special Census, Secretariat for Greeks Abroad, 2000); the data on co-ethnics holding Special Identity Cards (EDTO) provided by the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen (former Ministry of Interior) in 2008; and the data on valid stay permits from the Ministry of the Protection of the Citizen on 31 December 2009.

**Table 2.1.2 Immigrant Stock in Greece, on 31 December 2009**

	Size of immigrant stock	% of total resident population	Source of data
<b>Legal immigrant population</b>	636,258	5.86%	Stay permits valid at least for 1 day during 2009, Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen database
<b>Co ethnics from Albania</b>	197,814	1.82%	Data from Ministry of Interior, for 31 December 2009
<b>Co-ethnics from the Soviet Union</b>	154,000	1.42%	Secretariat of Greeks abroad, Special Census, 2000
<b>Estimate of irregular immigrants</b>	280,000	2.58%	Maroukis (2008), CLANDESTINO project <sup>5</sup>
<b>Total immigrant stock</b>	1,268,072	11.68%	
<b>Total without co-ethnics from the Soviet</b>	1,114,072	10.26%	

<sup>5</sup> The estimate of the illegally staying aliens offered by Maroukis (2008) is the most recent scientific estimate of its kind. For more information see: <http://clandestino.eliamep.gr> .

<b>Union</b>			
<b>Total population of Greece</b>	10,856,041		LFS, 4th trimester 2009
<b>Valid stay permits</b>	586,590	5.40%	Valid Stay permits on 31 <sup>st</sup> , Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen
<b>Estimate of total immigrant population on the basis of the LFS</b>	839,706	7.73%	Labour Force Survey, 4th trimester 2009
<b>Estimate of irregular migrants from LFS</b>	253,116	2.33%	LFS 4 <sup>th</sup> trimester 2009 – valid permits

We include in our analysis of the immigrant

population two groups of co-ethnics. The first group are Greek co-ethnics who are Albanian citizens (also known in Greece as *Voreioepiotes*). They hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (co-ethnics) (EDTO) issued by the Greek police and have the same socio-economic rights as Greek citizens but no political rights. EDTO holders are not included in the database of the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen.

The second group of co-ethnics are ‘returnees’ from the former Soviet Republics, generally referred to as *Pontic Greeks* who arrived in Greece in the late 1980s and early 1990s as economic migrants. They are officially considered as ‘returnees’ to the ‘motherland’ even though they or their ancestors had never lived within the boundaries of the modern Greek state. According to the special census administered by the General Secretariat for Repatriated Co-Ethnics in the year 2000, 155,319 Pontic Greeks had settled in the country. More than half of them (about 80,000) came from Georgia, 31,000 came from Kazakhstan, 23,000 from Russia, and about 9,000 from Armenia (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000). While Pontic Greeks have naturalised upon arrival through a preferential channel (see Christopoulos 2006) they may be considered as immigrants both in the technical sense (they moved to Greece during the 1980s and 1990s) and in the sociological sense (they face important problems of exclusion from the labour market and of social and political marginalisation).

The total immigrant population in Greece exceeds 11%, however if we exclude from this population the Pontic Greeks who are Greek citizens, the total immigrant stock including co ethnics from Albania (*Voreioipiotes*) corresponds to approximately 10% of the total resident population of Greece at the end of 2009.

About 2.5% of the total resident population or approximately 10% of the total immigrant population is estimated to be undocumented. These are either people who have never had a stay permit or who had legal status but did not manage to renew their permits. Although the total irregular migrant population currently residing in Greece may exceed Maroukis’ estimate for the end of 2007 we use this estimate in the absence of a more recent one.

Regarding the irregular migrant population it is worth noting that inflows of irregular migrants have continued unabated during the period 2008-2010. Table 2.1.3 below provides for the number of apprehensions of irregular migrants in Greece in the period 2007-2010:

**Table 2.1.3 Apprehensions of irregular migrants, per border, 2007-2010**

<b>Apprehensions</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Greek Albanian border	42,897	39,267	38,164	33,979
Greek FYROM border	2,887	3,459	2,355	1,589
Greek Bulgarian border	966	1,795	1,258	983
Greek Turkish land border	16,789	14,461	8,787	47,088
Greek Turkish sea border	16,781	30,149	27,685	6,204
Crete	2,245	2,961	2,859	2,444
Rest of the country	29,799	54,245	45,037	40,237
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112,364</b>	<b>146,337</b>	<b>126,145</b>	<b>132,524</b>

Note: data refer to apprehensions, not to people. Hence the same person if apprehended twice counts twice.

Source: Greek police data, [www.astynomia.gr](http://www.astynomia.gr)

While apprehensions at the Greek Albanian border have decreased, apprehensions at the Greek Turkish land and sea border have overall increased although perhaps the most interesting finding is that the distribution of irregular inflows between the Greek Turkish land and sea borders changes constantly. Table 2.1.4 refers to years 2002-2006 and distinguishes only between sea and land borders generically (and the rest of the country) without clarifying whether land border arrests were done at the Greek Albanian or at the Greek Turkish border. The dramatic increase of arrivals at the Greek Turkish sea borders in 2006 signals the start of a new period in terms of irregular migration inflows towards Greece via Turkey.

**Table 2.1.4 Apprehensions of irregular migrants per sea and land border, 2002-2006**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Land Border</b>	<b>Sea Border</b>	<b>Within the Border</b>	<b>Total</b>
2003	28,358	4,098	18,575	51,031
2004	23,221	5,926	15,840	44,987
2005	37,867	4,974	23,510	66,351
2006	53,556	9,049	32,634	95,239

Source: Greek police data, [www.astynomia.gr](http://www.astynomia.gr)

The number of apprehensions generally indicates not only irregular migration pressures at the borders or the presence of irregular migrants within the country but also the enforcement efforts of the authorities. Greece has beefed up its border controls in recent years. In fall 2007, the Greek borderguard employed 200 new officers in the Aegean sea. In addition FRONTEX has been operating in Greece since 2006 albeit with increasing intensity in the last couple of years. The joint operation POSEIDON has become now the largest FRONTEX operation in the Mediterranean and includes the first time ever deployment of FRONTEX's RABIT (Rapid Border Intervention Teams) (175 officers were sent to the Greek Turkish land border in late October and November

2010 and will stay there until March 2011), Project Attica which operates in the area of voluntary returns and 6 long term stationed focal points.

According to a press release by FRONTEX (January 2011)<sup>6</sup> the approximately 200 guest officers and interpreters dispatched to Greece are under the command of the Greek authorities and are mainly involved in patrolling the border and collecting information about the people-smuggling networks facilitating the arrival of the migrants. Since the beginning of operation RABIT in November 2010, a decreasing trend in the number of detections of irregular migrants has been observed. Specifically, October 2010 was the month with the maximum number of apprehensions (7,607) while during November and December apprehensions dropped by 37% and 57% respectively.

While migrants apprehended at the Greek Albanian border are usually returned to Albania, thanks to the protocol of cooperation signed between Greece and Albania and the good cooperation of the two countries on this issue, people apprehended at the Greek Turkish borders are seldom sent back to their countries of origin or to Turkey. Since Turkey does not practically implement the Protocol (Table 2.1.5 shows that out of 5,039 requests concerning 78,711 cases, 9,320 cases were accepted but only 2,695 people were effectively readmitted in Turkey).

**Table 2.1.5 Greek requests for readmission towards Turkey (2002-2010)**

**Α' ΠΙΝΑΚΑΣ**

**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΑΙΤΗΜΑΤΑ ΕΠΑΝΕΙΣΔΟΧΗΣ**

ΕΤΟΣ	ΑΙΤΗΜΑΤΑ ΕΠΑΝΕΙΣΔΟΧΗΣ	ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ Λ/Μ	ΑΠΟΔΕΧΘΕΝΤΕΣ	ΠΑΡΑΔΟΘΕΝΤΕΣ
2002	510	8.470	926	745
2003	528	5.380	1.002	374
2004	451	4.026	256	119
2005	174	2.087	330	152
2006	239	2.251	456	127
2007	491	7.728	1.452	423
2008	1.527	26.516	3.020	230
2009	879	16.123	974	283
2010	240	6.130	904	242
<b>ΣΥΝΟΛΟ</b>	<b>5.039</b>	<b>78.711</b>	<b>9.320</b>	<b>2.695</b>

It can be assumed that most of the migrants that are apprehended at the Greek Turkish border are released after a few days or weeks with an expulsion order at hand, asking them to leave the country within 30 days. Most migrants go then to Athens seeking to find their co-ethnic networks or their smugglers' contact people with a view

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.frontex.europa.eu/rabit\\_2010/news\\_releases/](http://www.frontex.europa.eu/rabit_2010/news_releases/)

either to finding a job and accommodation in Athens (including applying for asylum, especially people coming from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Palestine) or with a view to leaving for Italy and then some other EU country.

Regarding measures taken to reduce the irregular migrant population and to implement expulsion, Dimitriadi and Triandafyllidou (2009) show that apprehension and deportation is the regular practice for irregular migrants and efforts to establish voluntary return as a viable option for irregular migrants have been almost non-existent. Police data<sup>7</sup> also show that while 70% of the Albanian citizens apprehended by the Greek authorities are effectively expelled from the country, the relative rate of expulsions executed towards African and Asian countries range between 1.62 (average for African countries) and 2.74% (average of Asian countries). These data confirm the view that irregular migrants apprehended at the Greek Turkish borders in particular usually stay in the country undocumented despite having received an expulsion order.

## 2.2 National Composition of the Immigrant Population

Migrants in Greece come mostly from neighbouring countries. About 60% of Greece's foreign population comes from Albania while the second largest group are Bulgarian citizens, but their percentage in the total migrant population is considerably smaller. Georgians and Romanians are the third and fourth largest communities. It is worth noting though that it is likely that Bulgarians and Romanians are more numerous than they appear in the table below as this table captures only the EU citizens who have registered with Greek authorities. Qualitative evidence from recent research (Nikolova 2010; Lazarescu 2010) suggests that many Romanians and Bulgarians living and working in Greece do not bother to register as they do not know it is normally obligatory and because of a general mistrust towards Greek authorities (see also section 3 below).

**Table 2.2.1 National Composition of the Migration Stock in 2009**

Country of Origin	LFS 4th Tri. 2009		Third Country Nationals (TCN) Valid Permits December 2009		EU Citizens Valid Permits December 2009		All foreigners (EU and non-EU)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	501,691	59.74%	414,445	70.65%			414,445 <sup>8</sup>	56.64%
Bulgaria	54,492	6.48%			51,006	37.46%	55,909	7.64%
Georgia	33,870	4.03%	17,655	3.00%			17,655	2.41%
Romania	33,773	4.02%			38,388	28.19%	41,954	5.73%
Pakistan	22,965	2.73%	17,097	2.91%			17,097	2.33%
Russia	19,522	2.32%	13,512	2.30%			13,512	1.84%
Ukraine	13,748	1.63%	21,644	3.68%			21,644	2.95%
Bangladesh	12,533	1.49%	5,910	1.00%			5,910	0.80%
Syria	12,401	1.47%	7,962	1.35%			7,962	1.08%

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/STATS/011009meta16.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> This number referring to valid stay permits does not include ethnic Greek Albanians holding EDTO cards

Armenia	12,339	1.46%	6,277	1.07%			6,277	0.85%
Cyprus	11,773	1.40%			5,972	4.38%	5,972	0.81%
Poland	11,204	1.33%			10,876	7.98%	11,258	1.53%
Egypt	10,289	1.22%	14,732	2.51%			14,732	2.01%
Iraq	7,849	0.93%	1,183	0.20%			1,183	0.16%
India	7,654	0.91%	13,127	2.23%			13,127	1.79%
UK	7,539	0.89%			7,811	5.73%	7,811	1.06%
Germany	7,270	0.86%			5,914	4.34%	5,914	0.80%
Moldova	4,682	0.55%	12,217	2.08%			12,217	1.66%
Netherlands	3,548	0.42%			2,201	1.61%	2,201	0.30%
Philippines	3,302	0.39%	9,668	1.64%			9,668	1.32%
OTHER	47,262	5.62%	31,161	5.31%	13,983	10.27%	45,144	6.17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>839,706</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>586,590</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>136,151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>731,592</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sources: National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 4<sup>th</sup> trimester; Ministry of Interior Affairs, Valid Stay Permits on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009; Ministry of Citizen Protection. Registered EU citizens on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009.

### 2.3 National composition of asylum-seekers

Regarding asylum applicants (asylum applicants are not included in the stay permits database of the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen) the main nationalities are different from those of immigrants with Pakistan heading the list, followed by Georgia, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It is worth noting that both Pakistan and Georgia are among the top 5 nationalities in terms of immigrant stock too. The overall number of asylum applications is however rather low compared to the overall migrant population of Greece.

**Table 2.3.2: National Composition of the Asylum Seeking Population in Greece, 2009**

Nationalities	Asylum Applications <sup>9</sup>
Pakistan	3716
Georgia	2170
Bangladesh	1809
Afghanistan	1510
Syrian Arab Republic	965
Iraq	886
Nigeria	780
Albania	517

<sup>9</sup> Applications during 2009 (first instance only)

China	391
Senegal	336
Other	13885
<b>Total</b>	<b>17937</b>

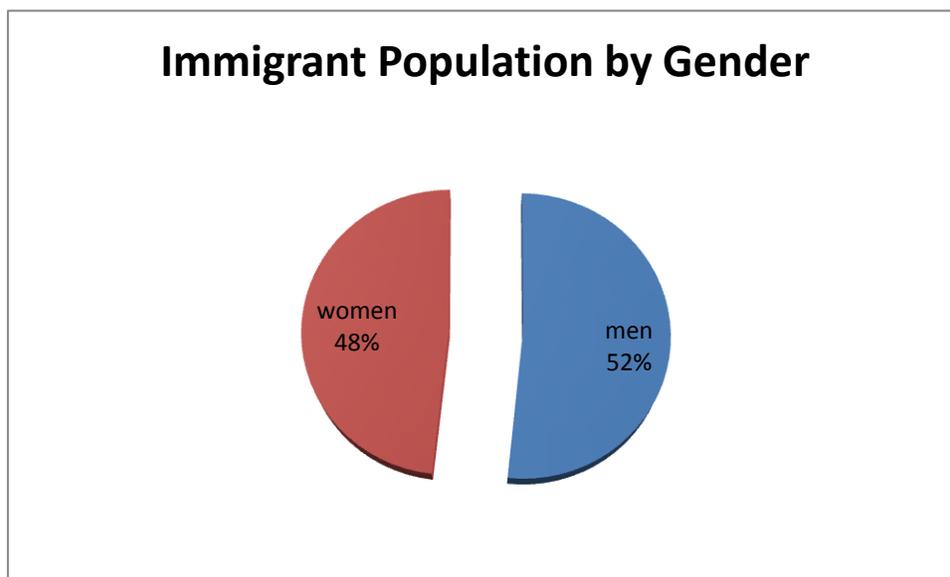
Source: UNHCR (<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>)

In the following sections, we shall briefly review the demographic and socio-economic profile of the immigrant and co-ethnic migrant population on the basis of the Special Census of 2000 for co ethnics from the Soviet Union, the Labour Force Survey (2009) and where other data are not available the census of 2001.

## 2.4 Gender<sup>10</sup> and Age

Based on the 2001 census, the percentage of men who migrated to Greece is larger than that of women (54% and 46% accordingly). The data from the LFS at the end of 2009 however show that the immigrant population today is more gender balanced (see Chart 2.3.1 below) as women represent 48% of the total population and men 52%.

**Chart 2.4.1: Gender distribution of the immigrant population, 2009**



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 4<sup>th</sup> trimester 2009

It is worth noting, however, that there is a gender imbalance with regard to specific nationalities. For example, in the 2001 census 96% of the Pakistani, 94% of the Bangladeshi, and 92% of the Indian immigrants were men. On the other hand 76% of the

<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, although the census of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-ethnics is generally detailed, it does not contain any data on the gender of the co-ethnic returnees.

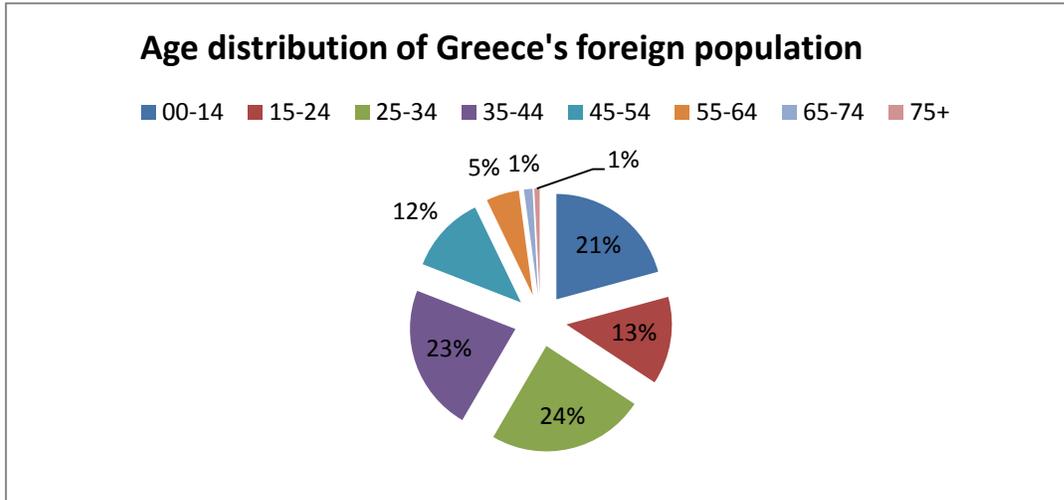
Filipino and 60% of the Bulgarian migrants were women. This imbalance still holds today (see table 2.3.1 below). Thus while the Albanian community is roughly gender balanced with slightly more men than women; the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are predominantly male (92% and 85% respectively) while for instance Filipinos are mainly women (nearly 80% of all Filipinos living in Greece). Similarly Bulgarians who reside in Greece are still predominantly women (62%) and so are Georgians (66%). These gender patterns represent also different migration projects of the people involved (see Section 3 below and also for a more detailed discussion Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2010).

**Table 2.4.1 Gender distribution of immigrant population for selected nationalities**

	<b>Men #</b>	<b>Men %</b>	<b>Women #</b>	<b>Women %</b>	<b>Both</b>
Albanian	269.640	53,74	232.052	46,25	501.692
Bulgarian	20.838	38,24	33.654	61,75	54.493
Romanian	14.325	42,41	19.448	57,58	33.773
Georgian	11.587	34,21	22.284	65,78	33.871
Pakistani	21.211	92,36	1.754	7,63	22.965
Bangladeshi	10.729	85,60	1.805	14,39	12.534
Filipino	699	21,17	2.603	78,82	3.302
<b>Total</b>	<b>434231</b>	<b>51,71233</b>	<b>405474</b>	<b>48,28767246</b>	<b>839705</b>

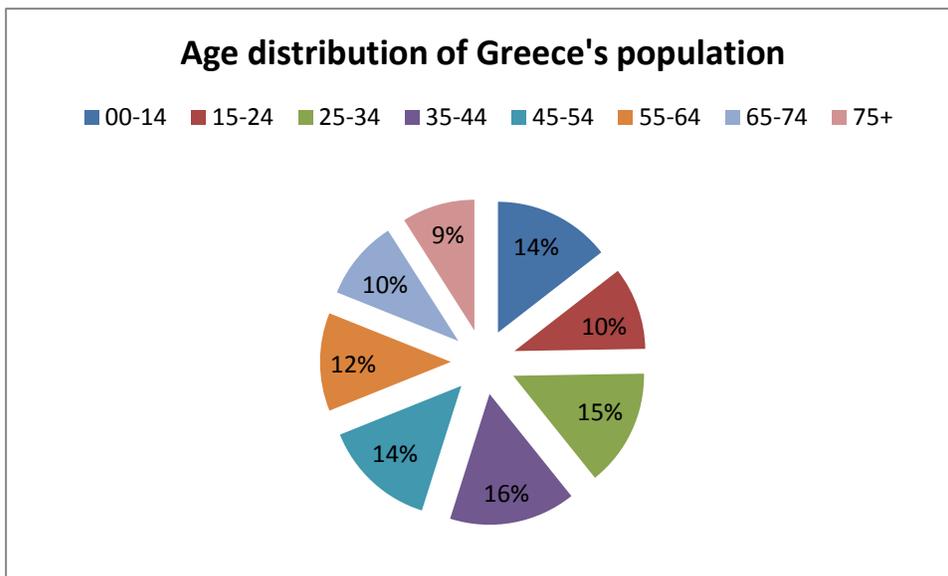
It does not come as a surprise that most of the migrants who live and work in Greece are part of the most productive age groups. About half of the foreigner population of Greece belongs to the 25-44 age bracket. Children under 15 years of age correspond to 21 % of the immigrant population (1 out of every 5 immigrants is a child and one in three is a young person – under 25 years of age). By contrast, people who are 55 years or older account for 7% of the total foreigner population in Greece. The age distribution pattern of the immigrant population is clearly different from that of native Greeks where people between 25 and 44 years of age account for one third of the total and people who are 55 or over account for approximately 30%. The immigrant population thus contributes to mitigating the demographic problem of Greek society.

**Chart 2.4.2: Age distribution of the foreigner population in Greece, 2009**



Source: ESYE, LFS, 4<sup>th</sup> Trimester 2009

**Chart 2.4.3: Age distribution of the total Greek population**



Source: ESYE, LFS, 4<sup>th</sup> Trimester 2009

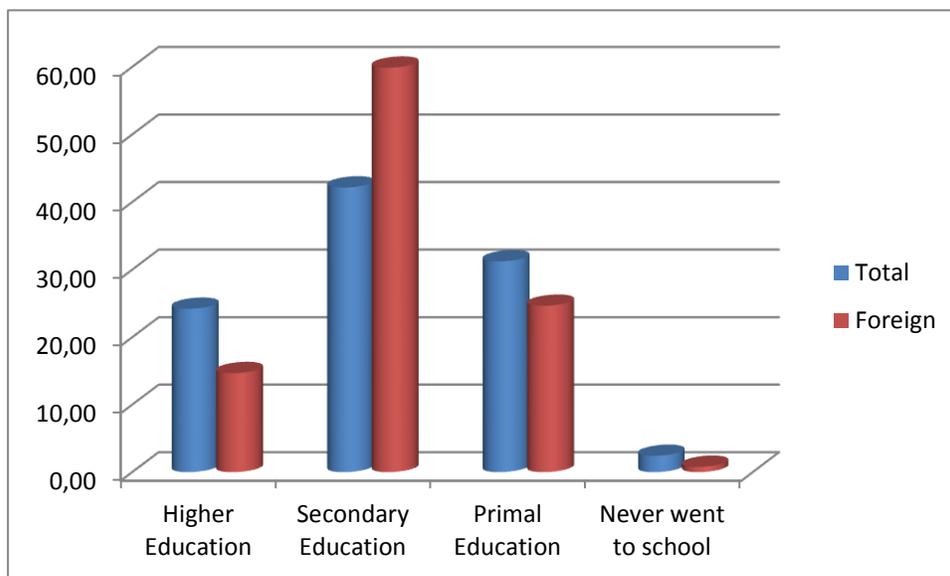
## 2.5 Educational Level

According to data from the Labour Force Survey (2009, 4<sup>th</sup> trimester) immigrants are mostly (about 60% of them) lower or upper high-school graduates. The percentage of immigrants who have not gone to school at all is lower than that of Greeks while however

the percentage of University graduates among immigrants is half that of natives (see Chart 2.5.1 below).

The educational level of immigrants varies mostly according to their nationality. Generally, the educational level of Asian immigrants is lower than the average of the total foreign population and they face great difficulties in learning Greek. As a result, the place reserved for them in the labour market is that of low payment and low specialization employment (Tonchev, 2007). Albanian immigrants, on the other hand, have a relatively high educational level and the majority speaks good or fluent Greek. However, there is a considerable mismatch between their educational level and the type of work they perform (Lyberaki and Maroukis, 2004). The cases of Bulgarian immigrants and repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union are also similar to that of the Albanians; there is a gap between their skills and their employment status. It is worth noting that Pontic Greeks have, on average, a higher level of education than Greek natives (Marouf, 2006).

**Chart 2.5.1: Educational Level of Greece’s Total and Migrant population over 15 years old in percentages**



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 4<sup>th</sup> trimester

### 3. Immigrant Insertion in the Greek Labour Market

Greece’s unemployment rate has fluctuated during the last decade. Starting from a relatively high rate in 2000 (of about 11%) it went down to 8.3% in 2007 but is currently (on the second trimester of 2010) at 11.8% as a result of the Greek financial crisis of this last year. However, what is peculiar to the Greek labour market is the important imbalance in the unemployment rates of the two genders. The female rate of

unemployment in the period 2005-2008 has been consistently higher than the unemployment rate of men by 7-9 percentage points. It is only in the last two years (2009 and 2010) that this difference has been reduced to 5% approximately. Still in August 2010 the male unemployment rate was 10% while it was 15.5% for women (for an average of 12.2%) despite the fact that only about half of women are economically active (LFS summary results, Table 3, August 2010<sup>11</sup>).

At the same time, unemployment rates for people under 24 years of age are consistently over 20% in the period 2005-2010 while the unemployment rate for the 25-34 age bracket is consistently above 10% and has reached a peak of 16.4 % in August 2010. Unemployment levels for the 35-44 and 45-54 age brackets are consistently lower and even during the last year they are near 10% or lower.

Furthermore if we combine the gender and age data tables, we see that unemployment rates for young women skyrocket – the gap between male and female unemployment is actually valid in all age brackets.

Against this background of unemployment patterns, it may come as a surprise that according to the LFS data for the last quarter of 2009 there were about 430,000 foreigners formally employed in Greece (while there were also more than 600,000 registered unemployed, both Greek and foreigner). The explanation is relatively simple and there seems to be a common pattern among southern European countries: the Greek labour market is characterised by high segmentation with special employment niches occupied by migrant workers. The native population's living standards have increased in recent decades and there is widespread participation in tertiary and higher education. Thus, young Greeks prefer to wait for employment that conforms to their skills, while being financially supported by their families, rather than take up a low-prestige, low-skilled and low-paying job. In this section we shall analyse the pattern of immigrant insertion in the Greek labour market over the last decade with a view to identifying its main dynamics.

Empirical research on the insertion of immigrants into the Greek economy in the mid-1990s showed high levels of employment in the agricultural sector and in unskilled work (about 30% and 12% respectively, in four regions of northern Greece) (Lianos et al. 1996). The study by Lianos and his collaborators also showed that the salary of migrant workers was, on average, 40% lower than that of natives. As nearly all workers at the time were undocumented, they did not benefit from insurance coverage, and their employers 'saved' that cost too. This study concluded that natives and foreigners were only partly in competition for jobs, as the latter mostly took up work that the former did not accept.

Similar patterns of limited competition were shown by a study concentrating on the agricultural sector (Vaiou and Hatzimichalis 1997). The authors pointed to the seasonal character of migration in northern Greece where immigrants from neighbouring (Bulgaria and later Albania) and even more distant (Poland) countries were employed in seasonal agricultural work. Such work had long been turned down by natives and, even before the massive arrival of immigrant workers, such jobs were usually taken up by members of the Muslim minority in western Thrace.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information see

[http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101\\_SJO02\\_DT\\_MM\\_08\\_2010\\_01\\_F\\_GR.pdf](http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101_SJO02_DT_MM_08_2010_01_F_GR.pdf)

Studies that took place in the late 1990s paint a more complete picture of immigrant contribution to the Greek economy, and, in particular, of their insertion into the labour market. Sarris and Zografakis (1999) have argued that immigration overall has a beneficial impact on the Gross National Product (1.5% increase), on private investments (0.9% increase) and on the cost of living (maintained). Immigrants also contribute to an increase in national production. In two-thirds of the cases, they take up jobs that natives reject, but immigrants also contribute to creating new jobs (or maintaining existing ones) as their work makes some small and medium enterprises economically viable, it revitalises some economic sectors (such as agriculture and construction), and overall while depressing low-skill wages it comparatively increases skilled wages (see also Baldwin Edwards and Safiliou-Rotchild 1999). These findings are similar to those of a study on the effects of immigrant labour on the Italian economy and job market (Reyneri 1998).

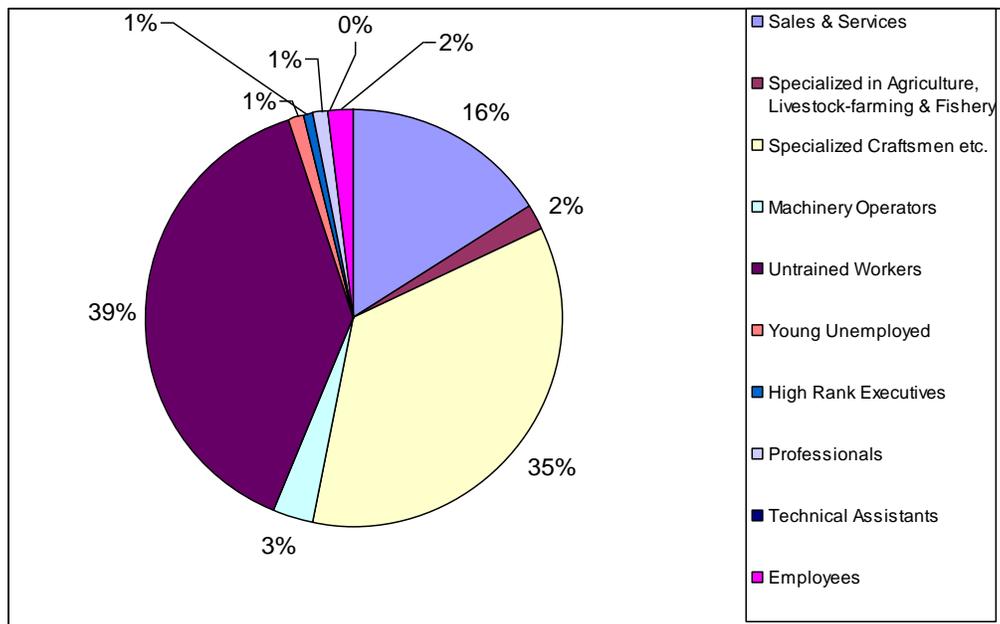
Sarris and Zografakis (1999) showed, already in the late 1990s, that immigrants contributed to inducing a 1.5% growth to the Gross National Product (GNP) and that they had contributed to lowering prices by 2%, which meant that Greek products were becoming more competitive for exports. They calculated that about 50,000 natives had lost their jobs because of incoming immigrant labour and that wages had been lowered by 6% in total. They also showed that two categories of Greek households, those with unskilled native workers and people with average or low incomes in urban areas (accounting for 37% of the total population) had been in competition or might have suffered from the impact of immigrants on the economy and the labour market. All other categories of the native population, both in urban regions and in rural ones (where all categories benefit from immigrant employment), had benefited from immigrant work. Immigrants had contributed to creating 20,000 high-skill jobs in the service sector in urban areas and 5,000 self-employed jobs in the rural areas. In sum, about two-thirds of the Greek population had experienced a positive impact while one-third experienced a negative impact of the presence of immigrant workers.

During the years 1999-2000 there was an increased demand for unskilled male workers for the construction sector and for women to be employed in cleaning and domestic care in the Athens area (Lianos, 2004). The demand for unskilled labourers was high in the years before the 2004 Olympic Games as many major public works were under development during that time. Indeed, in the construction sector, immigrants account for a large share of all workers. Among those, 82,922 men (72%) of the total number of immigrant construction workers are Albanians (National Insurance Service, IKA, data for 2005).

Recent data on immigrant insertion in the labour market (Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos 2007: 74) show that nearly 40% of foreign workers are employed as unskilled labourers, mainly in manual jobs, and another 35% are employed as skilled workers (craftsmen). An important part of the immigrant population, though, (15%) is now employed in the service sector and as salespeople in shops or open air markets. Other employees and technicians or drivers account for 2% and 3%, respectively, of the immigrant labour force. It is also worth noting that only 2% of immigrants are currently employed in agriculture compared to 7% registered in that sector at the time of the 2001 census (see Chart 3.1 below).

The study by Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos (2007) shows also that immigrants (both regular and undocumented) contribute between 2.3% and 2.8% of the Gross National Product. Zografakis and his co-authors (ibid.) apply a social accounting method to calculate the contribution of immigrants to the GNP and to explore three different scenarios regarding the evolution of the migration phenomenon and its impact on the Greek economy and labour market. In the first scenario, they hypothesise that immigrants continue to work but stop consuming in the second scenario immigrant stocks increase by 200,000, and in the third scenario immigrants leave within a few years. In the first scenario, there is a negative impact on the economy because of the reduction in consumption levels, in the second scenario there is overall a positive impact because of increased consumption and production and because the newcomers also create new jobs. The migrants who arrived earlier in this scenario, however, suffer from increased competition and wages become lower overall. In the third scenario, assuming that migrants leave the country in three progressive stages and assuming that there is an increased flexibility of native workers, at least half of the 400,000 jobs that migrants leave vacant remains vacant, creating important negative pressures on Greek businesses and on the Greek economy as a whole. Overall consumption falls, GNP falls, the level of wages rises for unskilled workers and the income of poorer families rises, but the income for middle and upper social class families remains the same or decreases. The deficit in the national balance of payments also increases.

**Chart 3.1: Immigrant Insertion into the Greek Labour Market (per sector of employment)**



Source: Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos, 2007: 74.

The findings of Zografakis, Kontis and Mitrakos in this study appear similar to those of the 1999 study by Sarris and Zografakis. In other words, immigrants compete

with unskilled and low/medium-low income natives for jobs but overall create new jobs for natives, increase consumption, decrease prices, make Greek products and businesses more competitive, and contribute thus positively to the national balance of payments. Moreover, in a number of sectors, immigrants take up jobs that Greeks are not willing to do. If immigrants were not there to take these jobs, there would be important negative repercussions for Greek businesses, products and exports.

A clearer still, if partial (because it refers to waged labour, registered with welfare services) account is given by the National Welfare Institute's data (IKA, 2009). In June 2009, foreign citizens accounted for 13.92% of all insured workers at IKA, albeit men accounted for slightly over 16% while women almost 11%. Albanian citizens accounted for nearly half of all foreigners registered with IKA. Among men, Albanians actually accounted for 55% of all foreign workers.

The second largest nationality among men registered with IKA was, quite surprisingly, Pakistani citizens (7.6%), followed Romanians (5.7%) and Bulgarians (4%). Among foreign women, Albanian citizens accounted for over 42% of all foreign women workers registered with IKA, Bulgarian and Russian citizens for 11%. These data suggest an over-representation of Pakistani men among IKA-insured male workers and of Russian and Bulgarian women among IKA-insured female workers. At the same time, we note an under-representation of Albanian women in waged labour registered with IKA.

Regarding sector-specific employment, the data from IKA show that Greek and foreign workers have a significantly different pattern of distribution across sectors. Among Greek workers registered with IKA, about 23% are employed in sales, 16% in manufacturing, 7.5% in construction, 7.5% in transport and communications, and 7.5% in the management of real estate. Among Albanian citizens this distribution is different: about 35% work in construction, 15% in manufacturing, 20% in tourism and catering and 14% in sales.

Among other foreigners (i.e., excluding Albanians and EU25 citizens), 15% work in construction (a percentage significantly lower than that registered for Albanian citizens), 18% in sales (a percentage higher than that of Albanians), another 24% in manufacturing (again a significantly higher percentage than that of Albanians). About 18% of other foreigners work in catering and tourism (slightly lower percentage than that registered for Albanian citizens). Another 8% of other foreigners are employed in private homes, a sector that is nearly absent from data on Greek (only 0.25%) and Albanian (only 1.4%) citizens. It is worth noting that Albanian workers account for over one-fourth of all workers employed in the construction sector, while Greeks account for just under the two-thirds of workers in this sector.

Looking at the data of the National Welfare Institute (IKA) regarding the declared profession of insured workers, we note again a significant difference in the pattern of distribution across Greek, Albanian and other foreign citizens (non-EU 25). Over one-quarter of Greek workers (27%) possess clerical jobs, and 18.7% are salespersons (including both shops and open air markets). Only 16% of Greek workers are employed as unskilled manual workers and skilled crafts workers.

Among Albanians, the rate for unskilled and semi skilled manual jobs is 57% and among other foreigners is approximately 54%. About 9% of Albanians and 10% of other foreigners are employed as skilled craftsmen, while 28% of Albanians and 17% of other foreigners are employed as salespersons (including both shops and open air markets). In

other words, in the sales professions, the participation of foreign workers approximates that of Greek citizens.

In the sections below we consider four groups of immigrations: the first group is the Albanian citizens, which constitute the largest national group within the immigrant populations. The second one is the co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union, another large group for which we have sufficient data and which is in a different position than the Albanians, since they received citizenship upon arrival in Greece in the early 1990s. The third one includes citizens of countries that have recently joined the EU. Finally, for the purposes of this report, we group together migrants from Eastern European countries (e.g., Ukraine and Georgia) and those from Asia (who are also the main source countries of asylum seekers in Greece).

### **3.1 Albanians**

One-fifth of the Albanian population left the country after the changes in the early 1990s. This fact puts the country internationally on the first place among all countries in transition economy, because of the fact that so many people migrated out of her borders – mostly to Italy or Greece (Castaldo, Litchfield and Reilly, 2005). Greece, on the other side, as a state that accepted numerous Albanians, also stepped at the first place in the EU, being the only country where one immigrant group accounts for more than 50% of the total immigrant population.

A survey of 500 Albanian immigrants conducted by Lambrianidis and Lyberaki in Thessalonike (Lambrianidis and Lyberaki, 2001) show that Albanian workers in the second largest city of Greece have moved from unskilled farm work in the early and mid 1990s into construction, small firm employment, semi-skilled work and transport services. The authors highlight the upward socio-economic mobility of Albanian immigrants who through increased language skills and a better understanding of employment possibilities in Greek society, managed to improve their employment situation and income. It is also worth noting that in the period covered by the research, the first regularisation programme took place thus enabling immigrant workers to obtain legal status and hence to enjoy insurance benefits.

Among the sample studied by Lambrianidis and Lymperaki, 82% declared to hold steady employment and 57% paid social insurance. About one-third of men interviewed worked in construction and one-third of women in house cleaning. Among women another third were housewives while among men, 24% worked in small industries.

These findings are confirmed by Hatziprokopiou (2003) who shows that Albanian immigrants in Thessalonike apart from construction and domestic services are employed in small enterprises (commerce, transportation, hotels and restaurants) and in small and medium-scale manufacturing. Contrary also to earlier studies (Iosifides and King 1998), Hatziprokopiou notes that at the time of his interviews, most interviewees had legal status and social insurance.

Lyberaki and Maroukis (2004) also showed that Albanian women were progressively moving out from unskilled agricultural work and cleaning services to become housewives, when the family could afford it. It is worth noting that in 2006 Albanians represented half of all foreigners insured in the National Welfare Institute

(IKA) (Maroukis 2010). Maroukis' recent study (2010) on the role of informal networks in Albanians' insertion in the labour market confirm the above results and suggest that it is the informal migration chains and the kinship and other ethnic networks that have assisted Albanians' integration in the Greek labour market despite difficulties in obtaining and keeping legal stay permits through the years.

### **3.2 Co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union**

Pontic Greeks, as co-ethnic migrants from the former Soviet Republics are called, started arriving in Greece at the end of the 1980s. The peak of their flow was in the early 1990s after the debacle of the Soviet Union and the ethnic tensions arising in many of the Soviet Republics. Pontic Greeks were citizens of the former republics of the Soviet Union who declared an ethnic Greek origin, and on that base were given Greek citizenship. According to data of the Directorate of the Returnees, in 2000 there were 155,319 Pontic Greeks in the country (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000)

Despite the fact that Pontic Greeks have Greek citizenship and their education level is higher than that of native Greeks<sup>12</sup>, they faced serious problems in finding jobs, mainly because they did not speak Greek at a good level, but also because the Greek state did not recognise their educational diplomas. The unemployment rates among them rose. Moreover, underemployment was noticed. The highest percentage of returnees worked as unskilled workers. Other common occupations were those of constructors, cleaners and – especially for women – housekeeping (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000).

Contrary to Albanians (who arrived with no skills and managed to integrate in the labour market, to open their own enterprises and to develop professional skills, thus climbing professionally and financially) Pontic Greeks got trapped into works with lower financial benefits and social status, despite the good education they had and the cultural bonds with Greece. However, as there are no recent studies on the Pontic Greeks, it remains unclear whether the second generation that is now becoming of age (children who were born in Greece or who arrived at a very young age in the country) is doing better socio-economically than their parents.

### **3.3 EU Citizens from new member states**

Two of the largest immigrant groups in Greece come from the two new member states that joined the EU in 2007, notably Bulgaria and Romania. These two groups recently finished their transition period as new member states; Greece opened up its labour market to citizens of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2009. The change in their legal and political status does not automatically imply that citizens from these countries no longer

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<sup>12</sup> This becomes apparent by comparing the educational level of the Greek population according to the 2001 census data for people over six years old with the data from the census of the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnic, conducted in 2000 (p. 64). For example 10% of the repatriated co-ethnics have graduated from a Technological Educational Institute while the correspondent percentage for Greeks is 3%. Also 12% are University graduates while the correspondent percentage for Greeks is 8%.

face discrimination or exploitation in the workplace. It is therefore important to take a closer look at their participation in the Greek labour market.

### **3.3.1 Bulgarians**

Nearly two thirds of Bulgarian immigrants in Greece are women. Their most common first occupation is live-in maids, while men, upon their arrival, are usually employed as untrained workers, mostly in construction. They are not a particularly young cohort: one-third of them is in the 30-39 age group and another third is in the 40-49 age group (Markova 2007). Until 1998 and the first regularization program, the vast majority of Bulgarian immigrants resided in Greece illegally and held informal jobs, without welfare insurance and with significantly lower wages than natives. After the regularization of 1998, a significant number of Bulgarian immigrants managed to improve their employment status and obtain regular jobs with welfare insurance. Many, however, continued to suffer from exploitative and informal employment conditions: employers paid only part of their due welfare contributions, and migrants ended up not satisfying the welfare stamps requirement when the time came to renew their permits (Markova 2007).

Nikolova (2010) notes that in the period between 2001 and 2008, LFS data show an increasing trend of Bulgarian men employment in the construction sector while in 2008 there were more than 250 Bulgarian citizens who were self-employed in the construction sector having their own team of workers. Overall through the years the LFS data show an increase in the number of self employed Bulgarians. Data from the Athens Chamber of Commerce show that there were 138 businesses registered in 2008 mostly in the catering sector (snack bar, cafés and restaurants). At the same time there is also an overall increase between 2005 and 2008 in the number of Bulgarian citizens (both men and women) registered with in the LFS as dependent employees.

Nikolova (2010) concludes though that while Bulgarian men are increasingly abandoning employment in the agriculture sector and move to construction, transport and small businesses, women seem trapped in the cleaning and caring sector, employed in households or by cleaning companies.

### **3.3.2 Romanians**

According to the 2001 census, there were approximately 22,000 Romanians residing in Greece at the time. Our own compilation of data shows that there were approximately 38,000 Romanian citizens living in Greece and registered with the authorities for a stay permit at the end of 2009.

Lazarescu (2010) notes how difficult it is to estimate the total number of Romanian citizens living in Greece. The reason is that many are employed in sectors of the informal economy and because, as EU citizens they may not register to obtain a stay permit for EU citizens. While registration for all EU citizens is in theory compulsory, in practice there are no sanctions if an EU citizen does not register. A stay permit for EU citizens is necessary only for certain transactions with public authorities or financial or legal institutions but generally EU citizens can go about their daily lives also without it. Lazarescu (2010) argues that the reluctance of Romanians to register has to do with several factors including *red tape* in Greek public administration, the difficulty to find a

regular job in the Greek labour market but also with Romanian immigrants' experiences and perceptions stemming from their experiences both in their home country and in Greece. According to Lazarescu (2010) Romanians are employed, like other immigrant workers, predominantly in construction, small businesses, catering, tourism, agriculture and domestic work.

### 3.4 Asians and Eastern Europeans

Both Eastern European and Asian communities are characterised by important gender imbalances. One main characteristic of the migration from the Philippines, Ukraine and Russia, is that 70%-80% of each group's total number consists of women. Most of them are live-in maids and care-givers. The opposite gender imbalance is found among certain Asian groups. The Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Syrian and Egyptian communities mainly comprise males (at a level of 85%-90%).

#### 3.4.1 Asian Immigrants in Greece

The influx of Asian immigrants in Greece started about three decades ago with the arrival of Pakistani and Filipino immigrants, followed by Indians, Chinese and Bangladeshis. After 2003 there was a significant increase in the number of Asian immigrants in Greece, and new communities have been created. It is estimated<sup>13</sup> that more than 130,000 Asians currently live in Greece and that most of them occupy low-paid positions that do not require training (Tonchev, 2007:3).

**Table 3.4.1: Asian Immigrants in Greece**

Main Groups	Census 2001	% of men	LFS (4 <sup>th</sup> quarter, 2009)	Valid stay permits on 31.12.2009	Estimated Number*	Main Occupations
Pakistanis	11,130	96%	22,965	17,097	40,000-50,000	Industries Constructions Services
Bangladeshis	4,854	97%	12,533	5,910	12,000	Small Shops Restaurants
Filipinos	6,478	24%	3,302	9,668	20,000	Domestic Workers
Indians	7,216	93%	7,654	13,127	12,000-15,000	Agriculture Fishery

Sources: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001(number for 2001 and percentage of men)  
Ministry of the Interior (Valid permits in April 2008)  
Tonchev, 2007: 17 (Estimated numbers and main occupations)

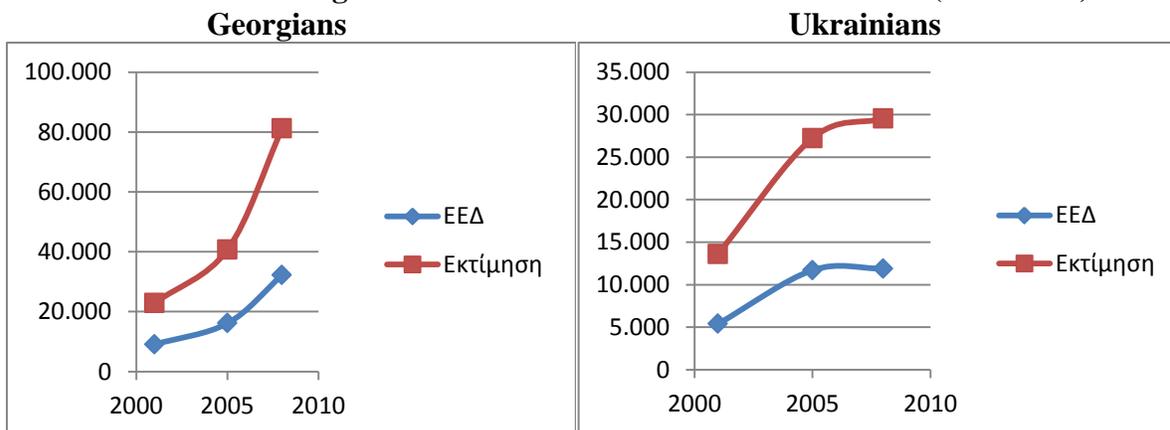
<sup>13</sup> However, there is no clear scientific basis for these estimates given by Tonchev and co-authors (2007).

Table 3.4.1 above is particularly interesting as it highlights how the LFS survey sampling does not capture appropriately immigrants who work in the live-in sector like Filipino women do (with the result of having about 10,000 valid stay permits registered with the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen while the LFS estimates the total size of this group at one third of this). The same is true for Indians where there are 13,000 valid stay permits on 31 December 2009 while the LFS survey estimates Indians to be less than 8,000 people.

### 3.4.2 Ukrainians and Georgians

Both Ukrainian and Georgian immigration to Greece started after 1989. While for Georgians Greece has been a primary destination country (perhaps for reasons of religious and geographical proximity and because many ethnic Greeks lived in Georgia before 1989), for Ukrainians Greece is not a main destination but rather just a node in the European migration patterns of this mobile nation. According to the 2001 census, there were 30,000 Georgians and 13,500 Ukrainians living in Greece at the time. The current estimate (LFS, 4<sup>th</sup> trimester 2009) similarly suggests that there are approximately 34,000 Georgians and about 14,000 Ukrainians living in Greece. Interestingly, the valid stay permits of Georgians are almost half the size of the estimated size of the group (see table 3.4.2 below). While by contrast Ukrainians are under-represented in the LFS while they hold 60% more valid stay permits than their current total estimated size in the FS data. This inconsistency suggests a higher percentage of irregular status among Georgians but a visibility in the labour market. In the case of Ukrainians it probably suggests that they are employed as live-in maids, a category that is not caught in the LFS sampling. Chart 3.4.2 below presents an estimate of the demographic evolution of the Georgian and Ukrainian population during the last decade.

**Chart 3.4.1.1: Georgian and Ukrainian citizens stock in Greece (2001-2008)**



Source: Nikolova and Maroufof, 2010, table 3.

**Table 3.4.2 Ukrainian and Georgian immigrant population in Greece, 2009**

	<b>LFS data, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2009</b>	<b>Valid stay permits, 31.12.2009</b>
Georgia	33,870	17,655
Ukraine	13,748	21,644

In the early 2001 the majority of Georgians (about 70%) lived in the Greek region of Macedonia and mostly in the city of Thessalonike. The remaining part of this national group lived in the wider Athens metropolitan area and in Crete. Ukrainians by contrast concentrated in the wider Athens region (about 60% of them) in 2001 already, while a few were scattered in other regions including Macedonia and the city of Thessalonike in particular, the Peloponnese and Crete.

Nikolova and Maroufop (2010) note that in data from the LFS in 2007 show that by the late 2000s Georgians had moved largely to Athens: about 40% of Georgians present in Greece lived in the wider Athens metropolitan area, another 40% in Central Macedonia and still another 8% in Crete. Nikolova and Maroufop (2010) argue that the change in the regional distribution of Georgians is related to new arrivals coming directly to Athens as well as to internal mobility from small towns to the capital city as work is more readily available in Athens.

The LFS data show that both Ukrainians and Georgians are employed in the typical ‘immigrant employment’ sectors of the Greek labour market notably domestic work (women) and construction (men) and to a lesser extent in tourism, transport and small businesses. Nikolova and Maroufop suggest that Ukrainians and Georgians are moving out of construction and into trade and transport, albeit this is happening very slowly and hesitantly with still very small percentages of people registered as workers in these categories of employment.

### **3.5 Ethnic business development**

A small percentage of immigrants in Greece run their own businesses. It is difficult to get information for the whole country, and data from the Welfare fund for professionals (OAEE) are unreliable (Zografakis et al. 2007), but according to the Chamber of Commerce in Athens each ethnic group is specialized and strongly represented in a specific type of business. The data of the Chamber of Commerce in Athens for the year 2006 indicate that Albanians are the most active in starting a business. Most of them run corner shops or kiosks. Immigrants from Asia – Pakistan, Bangladesh and India – run food shops as well as video clubs (mainly Indians and Pakistanis).

The Chinese in Greece are usually merchants and have retail stores selling clothes and other goods. Tonchev estimates the Chinese community in Greece at approximately 20,000 people, that is, 15 times larger than the approximately 1,500 Chinese registered at the 2001 census (Tonchev 2007: 17). About one-half of the Chinese community is settled in Athens and works in self-owned stores while a few thousand Chinese move to the islands during the summer months to take advantage of the trade opportunities there (Tonchev, 2007: 17).

In absolute numbers, Albanians constitute the most active nationality with more than 2,000 businesses registered with the Chamber of Commerce. Egyptians and Cypriots come second with more than 200 businesses each. Close after them follow Pakistanis and Syrians. In relative numbers, though, Asians are much more business-oriented than Albanians or other Eastern European groups. Comparing the number of ethnic businesses run by Asians in the Athens area with the actual size of these groups (several tens of thousands), shows that they are the most entrepreneurial nationalities. Bulgarians, Romanians and Ukrainians are under-represented among business owners despite the relatively large size of these communities.

### **3.6 Migrant insertion into the Greek labour market and the current economic crisis**

The overview of the data and estimates presented above suggests a mixed picture of the evolution of migrant stocks and their insertion into the labour market. Data on regular migrants suggest that, regardless of nationality, a significant percentage (ranging between two-thirds and three-fourths) of legal immigrants hold welfare insurance and hence a regular job. By contrast, estimates based on qualitative fieldwork or on small-scale surveys suggest that there is a large number of people, especially in the numerically smaller communities from non-EU countries, that live and work without documents. There is a scarcity of data or of earlier studies that would help in assessing the socio-economic and professional mobility of Asian and Eastern European populations as there is only one, for the most part, descriptive study on Asian immigrants in Athens (Tonchev 2007) and there is no study, to the best of our knowledge, on Ukrainian or Romanian immigration in Greece.

By contrast, there is a wealth of studies concentrating on Albanian citizens. These studies suggest that Albanian immigration has largely emerged from illegality to regular employment and legal stay. Their participation in welfare schemes has increased and they have achieved upwards socio-economic and professional mobility. This is particularly the case for Albanian men, while Albanian women appear trapped in the three-C sector (cleaning, catering and care-giving), with mainly informal employment conditions.

Regarding the sectors of immigrant participation in the labour market, dependent employment is clearly the norm, with very little incidence of ethnic businesses among the largest migrant groups from Eastern Europe. By contrast, Asian migrants are comparatively much more active in setting up small businesses. On the other hand, while a certain level of ethnicisation of the labour market persists with specific groups occupying specific niches (e.g., Chinese retail stores and trade, Bangladeshis in restaurants, Indians and Pakistanis in construction and other manual work as well as in corner shops, Ukrainians and Bulgarians as live-in maids, while Albanian women only as external domestic helpers and care-givers). Albanian and Bulgarian men tend to move out of unskilled manual to semi-skilled or skilled manual work as well as to trade, services and small businesses.

Overall, the data obtained from the IKA in 2006<sup>14</sup> on waged labourers show a significant inequality between the wages of different nationalities. Foreign workers receive wages that are between 30% and 50% lower than those of Greeks for general

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<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately IKA has stopped providing average daily wages per nationality in more recent years.

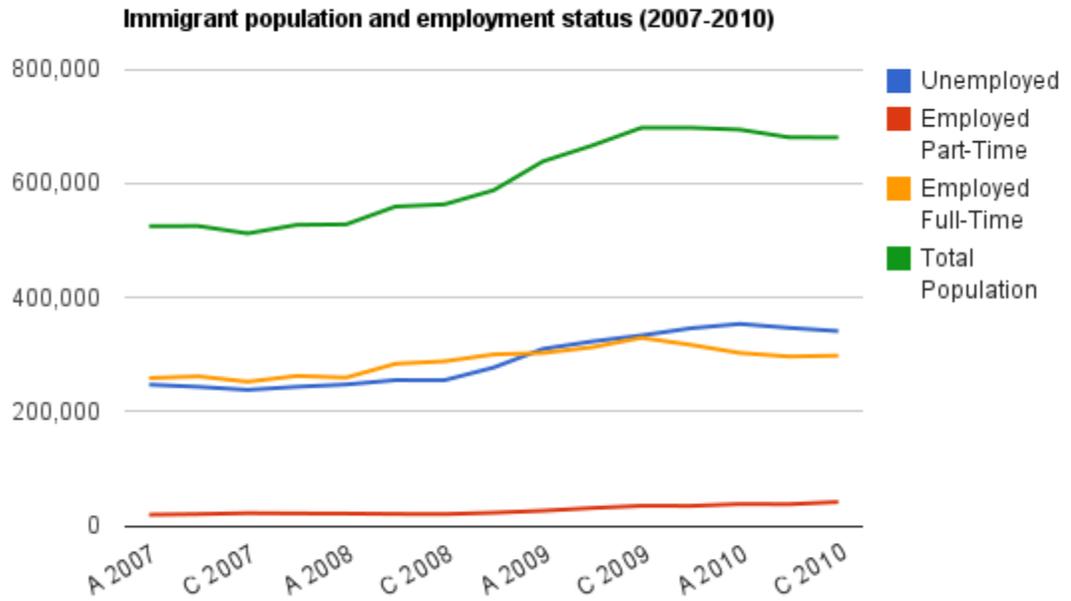
waged work and services. However, this inequality is significantly lower (between 6% and 15%) when it comes to the construction sector. It is also noteworthy that inequality similarly affects citizens of larger immigrant groups who come from neighbouring countries, citizens of Eastern European countries and citizens of Asian countries with no previous cultural or historical ties to Greece. Thus, it appears that discrimination and inequality is structured along the axis of Greek/non-Greek rather than depending on the specific nationality of the worker. Naturally, this hypothesis needs further testing. Additionally, the pattern of wage inequality suggests that in the ethnicised sectors of the labour market such as construction, discrimination and inequality in wages is lower, showing that there is probably a higher need for immigrant work and a better insertion of migrant labourers into these sectors.

The picture is not particularly promising as immigrants, at least those of the first generation, appear trapped in the low-skill, low-pay sectors of the labour market. However, in the current economic circumstances of Greece the concern has become less one of exit from the ethnicised sectors of the greek economy and more one of survival. Indeed an overview of the unemployment rates per nationality in 2009 and early 2010 suggests that unemployment among immigrants has been quickly increasing from mid 2008 till today while full time employment has been decreasing since the last quarter of 2009. The increase of unemployment is easily interpreted by the related crisis of the construction section which started already in early 2009 at the same time as the global financial crisis. The decrease in full time immigrant employment appears to be more related to the current internal Greek crisis which is accompanied also by a relative decrease in the total immigrant population according to the LFS survey.

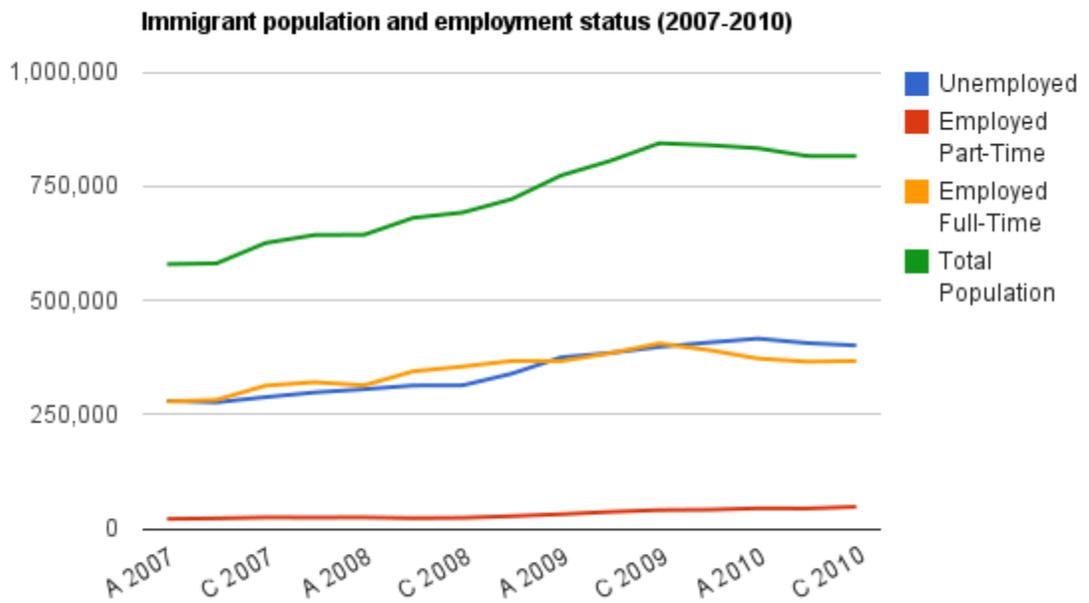
Indeed the LFS data (see below) suggest that immigrants are leaving Greece from early 2010 onwards. This is a very important finding as it is the first time in the last 20 years that the migrant population in Greece appears to be even slightly decreasing. It is worth noting that in a study on the impact of the global financial crisis, Triandafyllidou and Lazarescu (2009) concluded that in the summer 2009 while in most European countries the global crisis was in full swing, in Greece its impact was yet to be felt. Triandafyllidou and Lazarescu were concluding in that report:

‘Data available on immigration flows and on immigrants’ performance in the labour market and in related markets of money (remittances) in Greece are at best incomplete. Nonetheless, the information gathered and presented in this paper sends a clear message. The impact of the economic and financial crisis on immigration flows to Greece is null or indeed very small’ (Triandafyllidou and Lazarescu, 2009: 32)

**Chart 3.6.1 Variation in employment status for the immigrant (third country nationals only) labour force (2007-2010)**



**Chart 3.6.2 Variation in employment status for the immigrant (including intra EU migrants) labour force (2007-2010)**



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 1<sup>st</sup> trimester 2007 – 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester 2010

According to the LFS data the migrant population has been slightly decreasing since the end of 2009 while unemployment among migrants has been rising throughout 2009 but slightly slowing down in early 2010. The trends appear similar when we consider only third country nationals as well as when we include also EU citizens.

The following section discusses the main tenets of Greek immigration management and control policy during the past 5 years, with an aim to explaining why migrants in Greece find it difficult to find and keep a regular job, even after several years of residence in the country (see also Markova 2007, comparing Spain and Greece on this aspect).

#### **4. Greek migration policy: recent developments**

Our outline of the immigrant stock in Greece and of the employment patterns of different national groups suggests that immigration has acquired the character of a long-term phenomenon in Greece. Immigrants have settled in the country and contribute significantly to the labour market, the national economy, and the welfare system while they also slowly emerge as users of health, education and other social services. It took the Greek authorities nearly 15 years, however, to realise that migration policy planning should view migration as a long-term and multi-faceted phenomenon that needed appropriate management and integration policies, rather than temporary emergency measures to be dealt with. Such proactive and forward looking measures have not been adopted so far in Greece. Greek migration policies in the 1990s and 2000s have largely been characterized by a reactive approach to irregular migration and informal employment in the country's black market economy. The main legislative measure for normalizing the migration situation have been regularization programmes (three such programmes have been adopted: in 1998, in 2001 and in 2005, a smaller informal amnesty programme has also been introduced in 2007 for those who had had a stay permit and has lost it because they did not have sufficient welfare contributions – that would prove 200 days of employment each year). Integration measures have also been practically non-existent.

Reviewing in detail the development of Greek migration policy during the past 20 years goes beyond the scope of this report and is done in sufficient detail elsewhere (Triandafyllidou, 2010). However, we shall review briefly the migration law currently in force so as to present the contours of the Greek migration policy and its main flaws. We shall also review the most recent policy developments, notably the reform of the citizenship law and the introduction of local voting rights for third country nationals in March 2010.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This section is a revised version of the analysis of the Greek migration policy developments over the past 20 years in Triandafyllidou and Marouf (2008).

#### **4.1 Immigration law currently in force**

On 23 August 2005 the then conservative government in power voted on a new law (law 3386/2005) that regulates migratory matters and incorporates the EU Directives 2003/86 (on the right to family reunification) and 2003/109 (on the status of long-term residents) to the national legal order. This law has been in force since 1.1.2006 but was modified in February 2007 by law 3536/2007.

Both acts (3386/2005 and 3536/2007) included new regularisation programmes. Article 91 of law 3386/2005 introduced a regularisation programme for undocumented migrants who had entered Greece before 31 December 2004. Law 3536/2007, article 18 introduced a new, smaller regularisation programme enabling those who had not been able to renew their permits, according to law 3386, on time and those who were not able to collect the necessary welfare insurance stamps. Thus the aim of these two programs (the second one ended on 30 September 2007) was to incorporate into legal status certain, specific categories of immigrants who had lived in Greece for several years (the date by which the foreigner had to have come to Greece remained 31 December 2004) but who, for various reasons, had not been able to legitimize their residence and employment in the country. The application of these two

Act 3386/2005 regulates matters of entry, stay and social integration of third country nationals in Greece. EU citizens, refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from its field of effect. The new law abolishes the existence of separate work and stay permits and introduces a stay permit for different purposes (e.g., for work, study, family reunification, as well as a variety of special reasons, article 9 of the law). The application fee of 150 euros for issuing a residence permit with a one-year duration remains, but the fee rose to 300 euros and 450 euros for permits with two- and three-year periods of duration, correspondingly. As a result of protests by immigrant organizations and other institutions, this provision was amended so that dependent family members did not have to pay the fee.

It is worth noting that the work-load required to issue a permit for the Greek administration is the same (or almost the same) regardless of the duration of the permit. Therefore the application fee of 150 euros per year constitutes an 'additional tax' for the applying foreign citizens. The increase of the fee is all the more provocative if one considers the huge delays in issuing/renewing residence permits during the effect of the law 2910/2001 which, to a certain extent, continue today. According to sources in the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Int.2), the delays have been reduced in certain municipalities but, despite that, issuing or renewing a permit in three months is considered a record!

Law 3386/2005 introduces a stay permit for financial investment activities (articles 26-27) which refers to people who are willing to invest a capital of at least 300,000 euros in Greece. The permit for independent financial activity is defined separately (articles 24-25, and requires a minimum investment of 60,000 euros) and so is the residence permit for employees of companies of another EU member or a third country who are moved to Greece for a limited period of time in order to offer specific services within the frameworks of their employment for their company. Moreover, the law determines the condition for issuing residence permits for a series of other categories (such as athletes and trainers, intellectuals and artists, financially independent people,

practitioners of known religions, scientific researchers, tour guides, students in Athoniada school in Athos etc.). It is also very important that the new law has special provisions for the protection of human trafficking victims (articles 46-52).

Stay permits issued for study purposes (article 28-29) include a time limitation: the total duration of the study increased by half, plus one year for learning the language. The law indirectly emphasizes the development of the education sector and vocational training in Greece because it recognizes all the relevant public and private institutions of higher and professional education. In addition, it does not set a maximum yearly limit of residence permits to be issued for this reason. It also establishes the possibility for foreign students to work part-time (article 35).

Articles 53-60 of law 3386/2005 determine the right and the procedure to family reunification by incorporating the relevant EU directive to the Greek legal order. Law 3536/2007 waives the application fee for the stay permits of under-age children. Articles 67-69 incorporate the EU directive for the status of long-term residents into the Greek legal order. A basic knowledge of the Greek language and of Greek history and culture are among the preconditions for acquiring this status. The original Presidential Decree that determined the details for the certification of Greek language knowledge was particularly restrictive (it only accepted high-school diplomas or a certificate of special courses that the Ministry would found specifically for the status of long-term residents, but did not recognize, for example, the degrees from Greek Universities and Technological Education Institutes or other state language departments) and was heavily criticized by NGOs and immigrant associations. Finally, a new ministerial decree was issued in November 2007 that simplified the procedure of proving one's fluency in Greek and of one's knowledge of Greek history and culture.

Finally, articles 65 and 66 introduce a Complete Action Plan for the social integration of immigrants based on the respect of their fundamental rights and with the purpose of their successful integration into the Greek society, emphasizing the following sectors: certified knowledge of the Greek language, completing introductory courses on Greek history, culture and the Greek way of life, integration to the Greek labor market and active social participation (article 66, paragraph 4). This program has, so far, remained largely on paper with hardly any actions implemented.

Act 3386/2005 also regulates reasons for revoking a residence permit and the procedure of administrative deportation (see particularly article 76). It is worth noting that, unfortunately, this law continues to prohibit (article 84) Greek public services, legal entities, organizations of local government, organizations of public utility and organizations of social security to offer services to foreigners who are 'unable to prove that they have entered and are residing in the country legally.' The only exception to this prohibition is hospitals in emergency cases and in cases of offering health care to minors (under 18 years of age). Children's access to the public education system is regulated by law 2910/2001, regardless of their parents' legal status.

In the following sections we would like to concentrate on two areas that are particularly important and particularly problematic in Greece, notably the migration management through the issuing and renewal of stay permits; and the procedure of 'metaklisi' notably the procedure for inviting a foreign worker.

## **4.2 Migration management through regularisation programmes and stay permit issuing and renewal**

Regularization programs can be positive since they improve irregular immigrants' social conditions, they give the state the ability to comprehend and control the labour market and increase its tax revenues. In addition, they can be beneficial to the social security system. Finally, regularisation programs can bring to light valuable information concerning a country's demographics and immigrant participation in the labour force. On the other hand, some argue that the regularisation of immigrants 'rewards criminal behaviour' and encourages further irregular migration (Levinson, 2005). Most importantly, however, regularisation programmes cannot be a mid- or a long-term migration policy – albeit this is what they have been in Greece – and in most southern European countries – in the past 20 years.

Greece has implemented a series of regularisation programs: the first regularisation programme was enacted in 1998 and there were 370,000 applicants during the first phase, but only 212,000 in the second phase of the programme. The second regularisation programme took place in 2001 with 362,000 applicants, and the third major regularisation took place in 2005-06 with approximately 200,000 applicants. The applicants in each programme partly overlapped since several who failed under the first programme applied during the second, and, similarly, some who failed to obtain a permit under the regularisation of 2001 re-applied in 2005. It is also noteworthy that many people did not manage to make the transition from the so-called Green Card permit introduced in decrees 357 and 358 of 1997 to the separate stay and work permits of law 2910/2001, and then to the unified stay permit for work purposes of law 3386/2005.

The need for repeated regularisations in Greece is closely related not only to the continuing illegal immigration to the country but also, and to a large extent, to the frequent shifts between legal and illegal status that many immigrants have experienced. This has happened for two main reasons: first, because the procedures foreseen by the law to issue or renew a stay permit are complicated and the procedure cumbersome, and second because in Greece there has as yet not been a proper policy for managing legally incoming economic migration. In other words, the question of regularisations in Greece lies at the intersection of the two main troubles that plague migrants: first, that they cannot come legally to the country to work and, second, that if they manage to legalise their status it is difficult to find and keep a regular job so that they satisfy the conditions set out by the law at the time of renewing their permit.

### **4.2.1 The procedure of inviting a foreign worker (*metaklisi*)**

According to law 3386/2005 on the 'entrance, settlement and social integration of citizens of third countries in the Greek State' there are seven types of residence permits: for work, for independent economic activity, for special reasons such as studying, for exceptional reasons, mostly humanitarian ones, for family reunification, of indefinite duration and of long-time residence.

Since the enactment of the first Greek law that intended to regulate immigration, and more specifically to counteract irregular migration (1975/1991), in 1991, the only

way for a foreign worker to acquire a residence permit with the purpose of employment is through invitation (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2007). The Greek policy for labour migration (*metaklisi*), which involves a rather complex procedure, allows immigrants to work in Greece, for a specific employer and for a specific type of work, but only if there is an available position for them which cannot be filled by the Greek labour force or the immigrant labour force that already resides in Greece.

Law 3386/2005 seeks to rationalise the system of inviting foreign workers to Greece (article 14). The new system, which is similar to that established by law 2910/2001 commented upon earlier, is based on the preparation of an annual review regarding the domestic labour market needs in specific sectors of work. On the basis of this report, the Ministry of Employment, determines 'the highest number of stay permits for work purposes that can be issued each year to third country nationals, per prefecture, per nationality, per type and length of employment, and all related details (article 14, point 4).

Employers who wish to invite an immigrant worker need to apply to their municipality by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of every year, informing the authorities of the number and the specialization of the employees they need for the following year as well as of the duration of the employment. The municipality sends the requests to the prefecture (*Nomarchia*) and the prefecture sends the requests to the appropriate branch of the Organization for the Employment of the Labour Force (OAED) for a labour market test. OAED assesses whether there are Greek citizens, EU citizens, refugees or legally residing aliens who are available for the requested positions, the green light is given to the request.

After the control by OAED, each prefecture sends these requests to the Directorate of Foreigners and Immigration of the Region (*Perifereia*), which sends a report to the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, based upon which the Ministers of Internal Affairs, External Affairs and Employment determine the highest number of stay permits for the purpose of employment that can be issued in the following year.

The Common Ministerial Decision is then sent out to the corresponding Ministries, Regions, OAED and the Greek consulates abroad. After that, the prospective employers must once more apply to the Municipality. The requests are then forwarded to the Directorate of Foreigners and Immigration of the Region. As soon as the Region verifies that the same employers had also applied before the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of the previous year, checks if the specialties of the requests are included in the Common Ministerial Decision and that the number of employees needed does not exceed the maximum number, it sends the lists to the Greek consular authorities abroad. The consular authorities receive applications from prospective immigrant workers, compile lists of names and forward them to the Regions, which forward them to the municipalities. Finally, the interested employers make a selection from that list, by drafting an application of invitation for a specific person.

It is clear from the above description that the invitation procedure is extremely complex and time-consuming. Actually very few employers in the Athens metropolitan area chose to invite foreign labourers using the procedure outlined above. Stakeholders interviewed in an earlier study (Triandafyllidou and Maroufof 2008) including the Municipality of Athens, the Department of Stay Permits in the then Ministry of Interior,

the Confederation of Greek Labourers and with the Ministry of Employment (directorate for seasonal permits) confirm the abject failure of the invitation system for short- or mid-term employment positions.

The processing of invitations may last up to 18 months. It is obvious that private firms cannot wait for such a long time for one or more workers who are urgently needed. At the same time, it is also extremely difficult for a firm to foresee, with a 12-month advance notice, their labour needs and hence apply a year or 1.5 years earlier than when the vacancy arises. The problem with following this procedure is also complicated by the fact that since the Labour Offices established by law 3386/2005 have not been created in Greek consulates as planned, there is no way for the employer to test or interview or receive additional information about the worker that will come to fill their vacancies. Overall, the meeting of supply and demand through the current invitation system is virtually impossible.

The invitation procedure is ill-crafted to respond to the needs of the labour market and becomes completely unrealistic if one considers that the labour market sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed (construction, catering, small factories, retail services) are dominated by small firms that have to adapt flexibly and quickly to the swings of the market. Our fieldwork in 2007-2008 showed that the invitation procedure has given fruit only partially, in the agricultural sector, where seasonal employment is the norm. In northern Greece, where seasonal workers come from across the border with Albania, the FYROM or Bulgaria and only travel a few hundred kilometers, the invitation procedure has worked relatively well (Triandafyllidou and Maroufof 2008). Farmers tend to employ the same workers every year, so they make nominal requests for specific workers to the municipality. The needs are roughly the same every year and hence there is no need for labour market tests with O.A.E.D. that would further delay the procedure.

#### **4.2.2 Securing a permit and a legal job**

The second problem that immigrants are faced with once they manage to regularize their status is to find and keep a legal job, so that they will be able to renew their stay permit when it expires. There are two kinds of problems here. First, the problem of securing a legal job and, second, the immense delays in the issuing/renewing of stay permits that has marked the Greek policy since the late 1990s, when the first attempts to manage migration started.

Migrants face important difficulties in securing a contract and welfare payments, given that they are employed in sectors where informal work is the norm even for natives. Sectors such as construction, private services within families (caring and cleaning) and catering (e.g., as waiters or cleaners in family restaurants, small pensions, small cafes) belong to the secondary job market. Workers in these sectors often work without a proper contract or welfare contributions. Nonetheless, the issuing and renewal of stay permits for work purposes in Greece is totally conditioned upon providing proof of legal employment. Since immigrants may have been employed at different jobs during a calendar year, the law specifies that employment is proven by their contributions to the welfare system, by the famous 'welfare stamps' (*ensima*) that provide proof of their days of work. Law 3386/2005 has actually simplified the matter allowing for immigrants who

work in construction or domestic services to register on their own with the National Insurance Institute (IKA) to be eligible for a lower level of contributions (those foreseen for part-time dependent employees) and hence prove their employment autonomously, without the need for producing a contract with a specific employer.

Immigrants have to collect 200 daily welfare stamps in each calendar year to have their permit renewed. When regularising their status for the first time, they are allowed to buy these welfare stamps independently from the IKA or from the Agricultural Insurance Organisation (OGA). However, when renewing their permits they are *normally* not allowed to buy missing stamps. The rationale behind the law here is to oblige the employers to pay welfare contributions to their employees, but it is unfortunately common knowledge that as long as employer inspections and sanctions are scarce (Int. 2), it is usually the workers that pay for the welfare stamps. The regularisation programme introduced by law 3536/2007 in February 2007 aimed at giving a second chance to people who had not managed to collect the necessary 200 welfare stamps through their employers, to buy such stamps for themselves and to avoid falling back to irregular status. Migrant workers' dependence on the welfare stamps for renewing their permits makes them unlikely to protest when employers violate their agreements and pay no over time or no weekend pay as they are afraid to be laid off and not be able to secure a new job with a proper contract. This practice has been documented by Markova (2007) for the late 1990s and is still the norm (Triandafyllidou and Maroufof 2008).

The above discussion shows how difficult it is for migrants to obtain and maintain a legal job with welfare contributions but also how vital these contributions are for the issuing and renewal of their stay permits. Things are rendered worse by the short duration of the stay permits and the lengthy process required for their renewal. Permits are issued for a maximum 2-year duration until the migrant completes a 10-year legal stay in Greece after which s/he may apply for a ten-year or indefinite duration permit. At the end of 2010 there are 62,000 people holding 10-year or indefinite duration stay permits (see table 4.2.2.1 below)

**Table 4.2.2.1 Long term permits, 2007-2009**

<b>Type of permit</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
10-year duration permits (on the basis of law N.3731/08, art. 9, par.1)	3	467	8,780	24,994
Indefinite duration permits (on the basis of law 3386/05, art. 91, par. 2)	353	33,332	36,715	36,813
Other indefinite duration permits	465	497	503	505
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>34,296</b>	<b>45,998</b>	<b>62,312</b>

As we have already argued in a previous study (Triandafyllidou and Maroufof 2008), the important delays still manifest in the Greek system for issuing and renewing stay permits are due to the following factors: (a) too many services are involved, (b) some archives are not available online, which requires the physical transfer of documents and

files between offices, (c) the insufficient training of some of the staff and also the fact that both municipalities and regions often work with temporary personnel.

The difficulty of finding and keeping a legal job, on one hand, and the long delays in the issuing/renewal of stay permits, on the other, constitute a heavy burden for migrants who are de facto settled in Greece. The combination of these two factors keeps migrant workers hostages within Greece's secondary labour market and under the mercy of sometimes unscrupulous employers.

### **4.3 Recent Policy Developments: Citizenship Law Reform**

Integration policies in Greece are almost non-existent and integration (or indeed assimilation) through naturalisation has not been an easy option either since Greek nationality has been based predominantly on the *jus sanguinis* principle and until March 2010 the naturalisation procedure was long, costly and with a very uncertain outcome even for applicants who satisfied the requirements.

Law 2130/1993 and its revision in 2001 (law 2910/2001), stated that immigrants who wish to become Greek citizens have to be residents in Greece for ten during the last twelve years. Citizenship test requirements, similar to other European countries were based on proficient knowledge of Greek history, language and culture. The procedure was cumbersome, expensive and lacked transparency.<sup>16</sup>

The law provided for a separate procedure for acquiring Greek nationality (the so-called procedure of *nationality definition*) that has been reserved for people who can prove to the competent authorities that they are of Greek descent and 'behave as Greeks'. (Christopoulos 2006: 254). This rule refers to people of Greek ethnic origin, such as the Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union (who settled in Greece mostly during the 1990s) and for ethnic Greek Albanians. Pontic Greeks' naturalisation was actually implemented through a simplified citizenship definition procedure called 'specific naturalisation' (Christopoulos 2006: 273). This was not the case for ethnic Greek Albanians who migrated to Greece during the same period (see also Author D), who were granted special long-term residence permits instead.

Between 1980 and 2003, 66 per cent of TCNs who obtained Greek citizenship were of Greek descent and 34 per cent were of foreign ethnicity. The numbers altered after 1997, when the numbers of co-ethnics granted Greek citizenship started becoming smaller than those of non co-ethnics (Pavlou 2004). In November 2006, a joint decision by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs facilitated the naturalisation procedure for ethnic Greek Albanian citizens waiving the fee and the discretionary character of the judgment. Indeed during the period 2007-2009 approximately 45,000 people have acquired Greek citizenship, the vast majority of whom were Albanians of Greek ethnic origin (see table 4.3.1 below)

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<sup>16</sup> A high fee was paid by the applicant (1,500 Euro) and the decision was discretionary; authorities were not required to reply within a specified period of time and needed not justify a negative decision to the applicant. If an applicant was rejected, s/he could apply again after one year.

**Table 4.3.1 Acquisition of Greek citizenship (1998-2009)**

**Number of decisions of naturalisations of coethnics (EDTO card holders), per year**

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
56	69	66	58	52	36	23	66	68	10,806	16,922	17,019

Source: Ministry of Interior, data release on 29 January 2011.

\* Number of naturalisations approved by the Ministry of the Interior

\*\* Naturalisations completed during the year.

In March 2010 however the Greek Parliament voted a new law (no. 3838/2010) on citizenship and naturalisation which facilitated naturalisation for the first generation, introduced provisions for the second generation and local voting rights for third country nationals who have been living in Greece legally for at least 5 years and who hold permits of 10-year or indefinite duration or EU long term resident permits.

The new law has lowered the requirement for naturalising from 10 to 7 years. Immigrants who wish to naturalise however have to first obtain the EU long term migrant status for which they can apply after 5 years of legal stay. The requirements for naturalising have been lowered although they still include knowledge of the Greek language and culture. By contrast to the previous law authorities are required to reply to applicants within a certain time frame and justify their decision.

Concerning the second generation, the new law provides that children born in Greece of foreign parents can become Greek citizens by a simple declaration of their parents provided that both parents have been living in Greece legally for at least 5 years. If one of the parents does not fulfil the requirement, the declaration can be made and the child may obtain the Greek citizenship as soon as the second parent satisfies the requirement.

Children who were born abroad of foreign parents but who have completed at least six years of schooling in Greece and live in Greece may also naturalise with a simple declaration by their parents provided again that both parents have been living in Greece legally for at least 5 years.

The new law introduces full local political rights (both active and passive) for foreign residents who have lived in Greece for 5 years legally. However immigrants who wish to register to vote must also satisfy one of the following conditions: be in possession of an EU long term resident status, or of a national stay permit of ten year or indefinite duration, or be parents of a Greek citizen, or be married to a Greek or EU citizen, or hold a special identity card issued to ethnic Greeks from Albania.

Law 3838/2010 has made a breakthrough by Greek standards introducing a substantial element of *jus soli* in the concept of Greek citizenship. Even though the participation of third country nationals in the local and regional elections of 7 November has been pretty small (about 15,000 third country nationals and 14,000 EU citizens registered to vote) the law is bound to make a big difference in the composition of the Greek citizenry in the years to come.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

There is a little over 1 million third country nationals living in Greece at the end of 2009. Of those about 650,000 are legal (or in the process of renewing their stay permits), some 180,000 are co-ethnics from Albania holding special identity cards and an estimated 280,000 are irregular. The largest immigrant group in Greece remain Albanian citizens accounting for about 60% of the total immigrant population. The top 5 immigrant groups after Albanians include Bulgarians and Romanians (as regards other EU MS) and Georgians, Ukrainians and Pakistanis.

The LFS data suggest that the total immigrant population of Greece has been decreasing during the first semester of 2010 as the Greek financial crisis has exploded. Immigrant unemployment has also risen from mid-2009 onwards.

Irregularity and instability (due to the short duration of stay permits and the difficulty to renew them by proving that one has been formally employed with welfare payments for at least 200 working days per year) remain two of the main ingredients of the Greek migration management model. After 20 years of experience as a host Greece is still to design and implement legal migration channels for third country nationals and a viable system of management for immigrants who are already in the country.

At the same time the onset of the new decade finds Greece with a brand new citizenship law that radically changes the prospects of the second generation and to a large extent the prospects also of their parents both for naturalization but also for local political participation as third country nationals.

The Greek labour market is ethnically segmented. Immigrant workers are all employed in six sectors: agriculture, construction (men), cleaning and caring (women), tourism, and catering (both men and women). The largest share of migrants however works in the construction services and in domestic work. Albanians who are not only the largest but also the longest established migrant population in Greece have slowly moved out from unskilled work in agriculture and construction to skilled work in these sectors or in small businesses, trade, tourism and transport. However, Albanian women and generally all migrant women remain largely trapped in the cleaning and caring sector. Albanian women have moved out of domestic work to the extent that through the 2000s decade some Albanian women became housewives and moved out of paid employment altogether.

Despite our efforts it is as yet impossible to provide for a complete picture of the immigration phenomenon in Greece because of the lack of statistical data. A full overview of the migrant and co-ethnic population will be possible only after the 2011 census.

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