

Migration in Greece Developments in 2013

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Professor Anna Triandafyllidou

Global Governance Programme
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute

Member of the Scientific Board, ELIAMEP

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Executive Summary

Overall Context

Greece has been into a deep economic recession for four years now. Unemployment levels have tripled and the purchase power of citizens has plummeted. During these same years (notably since 2009) the country has seen important changes in its political landscape, where a far right wing party of Neo-Nazi orientation, Golden Dawn, has entered Parliament and received 7% of the national vote in the 2012 elections while it is consistently polling at above 10% during the last year. The major centre-left party PASOK has nearly disappeared while the small left wing party SYRIZA is now polling second and has received nearly 27% of the vote, just 3% behind the currently governing conservative party New Democracy (just under 30% of the national vote).

At the same time and despite important pressures from the European Union and the so-called trojka (the EU, the IMF and the ECB) structural changes in the country's economy and public sector are hard to come by as vested interests of the political elites, trade unions and some sections of the workforce (those more protected) resist these changes.

In this explosive landscape, Greece has been facing two important migration crises. On one hand a crisis of irregular migration and asylum seeking as Greece is a main point of arrival and entry into the EU of migrants and asylum seekers from Asia and Africa. On the other hand, Greece is yet to face its internal migration crisis, notably the rampant unemployment among migrant workers who are settled in the country, and their resulting de-legalisation (because of their inability to renew their stay permits). These internal and external migration challenges coupled with the acute economic and political crisis have led to a politically delicate situation of fast rising xenophobic violence and outright racism and the revival of a defensive nationalism that is both anti-European and anti-immigrant. Both the EU (and Germany in particular) and non European migrants have become suitable scapegoats that offer easy explanations to complicated structural problems that plague the country in this period.

Irregular Migration and Asylum

For the past ten years Greece has been an important first country of arrival in Europe for irregular migrants and asylum seekers that are heading west and north. During the period 2009-2012, the relevant irregular migration and asylum seeking routes through Morocco and Spain, and through Libya and Italy (particularly for sub Saharan African countries) have been reduced to a trickle (for different reasons each, see Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012 for a detailed discussion and assessment). Thus, the Greek Turkish corridor had absorbed the brunt of such pressures.

While until 2009 the preferred route was to cross the short straits between the Turkish coast and the Greek islands in the Aegean, since then, the routes have changed. The main bulk of the irregular migration and asylum seeking flows during the period 2009-2012 have been arriving through the Greek-Turkish land border in the northeastern corner of Greece, across the Evros river. The dynamics of these routes have been largely conditioned by continuing political insecurity and war in several parts of Asia and Africa (e.g. in Afghanistan, Pakistan, but also Somalia and more recently Syria) as well as by extreme climatic phenomena and overall high levels of poverty in other parts of Asia and Africa (e.g. Bangladesh but also west

African countries for instance).

Irregular migration and asylum seeking routes have been shifting again during 2013, so that now the main outflows from Syria go through Libya to Italy (Lampedusa and Sicily), and to a lesser extent again through the Aegean islands (where arrivals have picked up in the last few months). The Greek Turkish land border has been largely abandoned by irregular migrants and their smugglers, while there are reports that flows are now directed to Bulgaria and further to FYROM and Serbia and further north.

During the past decade, the Greek asylum system has been basically non-functioning leaving thousands of asylum seekers trapped in Greece, without documents, without assistance and without the means to make a living. Even though the European legislation on asylum and notably the Dublin II Regulation (since June 2013 replaced by the Dublin III Regulation) foresee that asylum applications should be processed in the first safe country of arrival, in this case Greece, several EU member states have stopped sending back asylum seekers to Greece since 2011 recognising that the Greek system was unable to process these claims.

A Humanitarian and Political Crisis

These two factors, the non-governance of asylum and irregular migration and the economic crisis have actually provoked a true humanitarian crisis in central Athens. Irregular migrants and asylum seekers continued to cross the Greek Turkish borders, were shortly arrested, held for a period of time and then released with an expulsion decision. They moved on and concentrated in the large cities, particularly Athens, without however much hope either of finding a job and making a living, or having their asylum case processed and move on or indeed being regularised (as happened in the previous 15 years in Greece and other southern European countries) and integrate somehow.

This situation has caused a political crisis in Greece as the Conservative government that was in power between 2004 and 2009 played the card of suppressing irregular migration and uncovering “fake” asylum seekers, to appease the uneasy electorate. The same has happened in the last couple of years when first an unstable Socialist government (2009-2011) and later a Coalition government (where the Conservative party is the major coalition partner) as of summer 2012, have proclaimed a migration crisis and have identified in irregular migration and asylum a major problem for the Greek economy and society, seeking to obfuscate that these two phenomena were also caught in the landslide of the overall economic and political crisis.

Migration Control Efforts

In August 2012, the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) signed an agreement worth 10 million Euros for the voluntary repatriation of 7,000 people. Furthermore, the same Ministry launched operation ‘Xenios Zeus’ aimed at apprehending undocumented migrants. The operation mainly targeted public spaces where immigrants are likely to gather, at the centre of Athens and other major cities, and at major port cities as well like Patras. Approximately 65,000 people were checked from the beginning of the operation in August until 24 December 2012, of whom only 4,128 were arrested because they were found to be illegally staying in the country. The Operation was heavily criticised by the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE Weekly Bulletin, 7 September 2012, available at www.ecre.org) for the risks it entailed for asylum seekers.

Rise of Xenophobia and Racist Violence

Alongside with this renewed emphasis on migration control, Greek public life has been marked in the last couple of years by a dramatic increase in incidents of racist violence, which have intensified after the 2012 national elections when the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party received 7% of the popular vote and entered Parliament for the first time in its history. During the last couple of months (since September 2013), and after the murder of a young Greek musician by members of Golden Dawn, the government has decided to crack down on this far right party. The party leader and several of its MPs have been arrested and put to jail with criminal charges. Polls have shown a decrease in its electoral appeal, as its criminal activities were disclosed. The situation however remains tense and ambivalent as there is a risk that such a criminalisation of the party activities may turn out to be in its favour - making the party leaders appear as victims of the major parties and the political status quo.

Migration and Economic Crisis

Greece has entered a period of deep economic and political crisis in late 2009 as the 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 have been exacerbated by the global financial crisis that had started a year earlier. The crisis has led to an explosion of unemployment rates, which climbed to 24.6% in June 2012 and further to 27.9% in June 2013 with a peak of 55.4% for youth under 25 years of age¹. However, the crisis has hit hardest the economic sectors where immigrants are largely employed. Construction in particular has been receding at a rate of nearly -20% annually² in the period 2008-2012.

These developments have particularly affected 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 the sectors where migrants are typically employed (such as construction, transport, catering, cleaning, 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 migrant cannot renew her/his stay permit they fall back into illegality and are then unable to get a legal job.

The Migration Code

A Migration Code is currently under discussion in the Greek Parliament. The new code like the previous migration laws, regulates matters of entry, stay and social integration of third

¹ Data published by Eurostat in October 2013, available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics, last accessed on 10 October 2013.

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/30/research-and-markets-idUSnBw305859a+100+BSW20130430>

country nationals in Greece. EU citizens, refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from its field of effect. The Migration Code aims to simplify and organize the different types of stay permits into six categories: stay permits for work or professional reasons; temporary stay permits: stay permits for humanitarian or exceptional reasons; stay permits for study, training or voluntary work; stay permits for victims of trafficking or human smuggling; stay permits for family reunification, and stay permits of long duration. This categorization follows the relevant European logic for stay permits and the Code transposes into national law the relevant EU directives for family reunification, migration for study or vocational training, migration of researchers, the Blue Card directive and so on.

The new code seeks to streamline the management of permits and to re-regularise people who have lost their status because of unemployment or other problems but are settled in Greece. It also seeks to clarify the situation of non-removables and give them some sense of stability and legality. The migration code is particularly stingy though in its stay permit provisions that touch upon wider migrant integration issues. It gives an extremely short term relief to parents of Greek citizens with the one year renewable permit as well as no sense of long term perspective in the country for Greece's second generation. People who are born and/or raised in Greece are given only a one year renewable permit with a view to securing their legal status regardless of work or study purposes but are not given any sense of citizenship acquisition perspective or a recognition by the state that they are indeed integral part of Greek society and the Greek constituency. This issue is however discussed in some more length below with regard to migrant integration issues.

In addition the criminalization of state employees including doctors in hospitals for instance, who provide services to irregular migrants as well as of those who rent accommodation to irregular migrants point to an increased emphasis to internal controls over undocumented stay. This development can be interpreted as an effort to clear the situation, notably to regularize (as per the new permits outlined above) those who have ties to the country, cannot be returned and/or have other special conditions that commend their stay in Greece, and, on the other hand, to make the lives of all other undocumented migrants particularly difficult. The success however of such criminalization measures is dubious to say the least.

The Migration Code introduces important improvements in the simplification and codification of the legal provisions and in fully aligning Greek legislation with relevant EU directives but it remains a management law rather than one that has a sense of perspective for Greek society and its changed demographic composition (as this is confirmed also by the 2011 census data).

Migration in Greece: Recent Socio-Economic and Policy Developments

1. Introduction

Greece has been into a deep economic recession for four years now. Unemployment levels have tripled and the purchase power of citizens has plummeted. During these same years (notably since 2009) the country has seen important changes in its political landscape, where a far right wing party of Neo-Nazi orientation, Golden Dawn, has entered Parliament and received 7% of the national vote in the 2012 elections while it is consistently polling at above 10% during the last year. The major centre-left party PASOK has nearly disappeared (falling to 12% in the last election but currently polling at 5% or lower) while the small left wing party SYRIZA is now polling second and has received 27% of the vote in the June 2012 election, just 3% behind the currently governing conservative party New Democracy (which received nearly 30%).

At the same time and despite important pressures from the European Union and the so-called trojka (the EU, the IMF and the ECB) structural changes in the country's economy and public sector are hard to come by as vested interests of the political elites, trade unions and some sections of the workforce (those more protected) resist these changes.

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This report aims to provide an up to date overview of immigration in Greece, the size and main features of the migrant population, and its current employment situation which is rather bleak. The report reviews the main features of the migration policy currently in force highlighting the main new elements of the migration bill currently in discussion in the Greek Parliament. We also discuss recent trends in media discourses and public opinion as well as the worrying rise of racist violence against migrants in Greek society. The report concludes outlining the prospects of migration in Greek society in the 2010s with a special consideration of the dynamics of irregular migration and the best ways to govern it.

2. The Migrant Population in Greece

According to the 2011 national census data, there were 713,000 third country nationals and 199,000 EU citizens (non-Greek) living in Greece accounting respectively for 6.5% and 1.8% of the total resident population. The largest immigrant groups were Albanians (480,000), Bulgarians (75,000), Romanians (46,000), Pakistanis (34,000), Georgians (27,000), Ukrainians (17,000) and Poles (14,000).

Table 1: Stock of Foreign Population, Greece, 2011

| | Size of immigrant stock | % of total resident population |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Total TCN population | 713,000 | 6.59 |
| Total EU population (non Greeks) | 199,000 | 1.84 |
| Total immigrant stock | 912,000 | 8.43 |
| Total population of Greece | 10,815,197 | 100.00 |

Source: Greek Statistical Service, National Census 2011, data published in September 2013.

About 67% of Greece's TCN population and 52% of its total immigrant population (including EU nationals) comes from Albania while the second largest group are Bulgarian citizens, but their percentage in the total migrant population is considerably smaller (8% of the total foreign population but 37% of the intra-EU migrant population residing in Greece). Romanians and Pakistanis are the third and fourth largest communities but their size is considerably smaller.

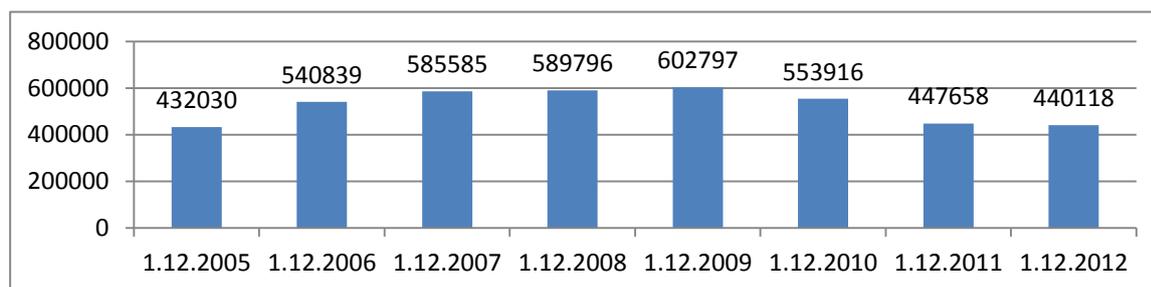
3. Inflows and Outflows of Legal Migrants

Data on effective inflows and outflows of immigrants in Greece are based on the issuing and renewal (or not) of stay permits but are not accurate as hardly any immigrants enter Greece through the legal channel (a more detailed discussion of this issue is given in Section 7 below on Greek immigration policy). However, data on stay permits do give an indication of the actual trend in terms of inflows and outflows and also in terms of the possible de-legalisation of migrants who previously had a legal status.

Figure 1 presents the legal migrant stock in Greece from January 2005 to December 2012, excluding seasonal migrant workers, based on the Ministry of Interior database of stay permits. The highest number of legal migrants present in Greece was registered in December 2009, with over 600,000 valid permits. Since then, there is a continuous decrease in the number of valid stay permits, which fell to just over 550,000 at the end of 2010 (553,916 on 1 December 2010) and to an all-time low of 440,000 in December 2012.

The decrease in the number of valid stay permits is related to the current economic crisis that Greece is facing. It should also be noted that this decrease does not necessarily mean that these migrants and their families have left Greece. Some of them may still be in the country but have lost their legal status because of the impossibility to satisfy the employment and welfare payment requirements foreseen by law.

Figure 1: Legal migrants (stock) Greece, 2005-2012



Source: Database of valid stay permits, Ministry of Interior.

There is a concern that the decrease (see Figure 1 above) in valid stay permits does not indicate a real outflow (i.e. migrants leaving the country) but rather a strong trend towards de-legalisation in the last year. Qualitative research suggests that there are long term migrants who are losing their permits because they are unable to secure formal employment or any employment at all (Triandafyllidou 2013b). In the following section we discuss the impact of the current acute economic crisis that Greece is going through on unemployment of migrants and compare such unemployment with that of natives and intra-EU migrants, seeking to shed more light to this issue.

4. Irregular Migration Flows and Readmissions

Greece has been characterised by relatively high irregular migrant population stocks and flows during the past 20 years. The evolution of presumed inflows of irregular migrants (as registered through apprehensions at border areas) has taken a new turn in 2011 (see table 3). The most notable reduction is at the Greek Albanian border, though this is closely related to the change in the visa regime for Albanian nationals. Apprehensions at the Greek Albanian border have dramatically decreased in 2011 and 2012, especially when compared to 2007.

While Albanian citizens were by far the largest group of people apprehended for irregular entry or stay in the Greek territory throughout the years (see also Triandafyllidou 2010 and 2011, SOPEMI report), in 2011 for the first time we note an inversion of this trend (see Table 5). The dramatic decrease of apprehensions of Albanian immigrants may be explained by three concomitant factors. First, after waiving the requirement for tourism visas for Albanian citizens for visits in the Schengen area of up to 3 months in December 2010, there is much less scope in apprehending Albanian migrants staying without appropriate status in Greece. In other words, the police would have to prove that the migrant has stayed in Greece for longer than 3 months and is not in possession of appropriate travel documents.

Second, the current economic crisis has probably prompted (See also Maroukis and Gemi 2011) many migrants who had lost already their legal status (or who had never had a legal stay permit, because they had entered the country after 31 December 2004, and thus were not eligible by law for the last massive regularisation programme.), to go back to Albania rather than endure the stress of being undocumented while their job prospects have also become rather bleak. Third, it is likely that less Albanian citizens seek work in Greece without appropriate stay permits again because of the economic crisis and especially the crisis in the construction sector.

The second noticeable shift is at the Greek Turkish sea and land borders. The Greek Turkish sea border was between 2007 and 2009 the main point of entry for irregular migrants originating from Africa and Asia: apprehensions throughout that period reached 74,615 persons. The reduction in apprehensions was seen by Greek officials and police largely as a result of FRONTEX's presence in the region (see below on FRONTEX operations). However it was more likely a result of the de-mining of Evros and a shift in smuggling routes, as well as cost-related, since it was cheaper for migrants to cross on foot or the river. Thus, the significant drop in number of apprehensions at the sea border coincided with a shift of migratory routes to the land border of Evros (see further below for the response of the Greek government).

Overall apprehensions at the Greek Turkish border (both land and sea) have decreased between 2011 and 2012 (with a noticeable decrease at the Greek Turkish land where they have been halved).

Table 2. Apprehensions of irregular migrants, per border, 2007-2012

| Apprehensions | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Greek Albanian border | 42,897 | 39,267 | 38,164 | 33,979 | 11,743 | 10,927 |
| Greek FYROM border | 2,887 | 3,459 | 2,355 | 1,589 | 1,003 | 1,168 |
| Greek Bulgarian border | 966 | 1,795 | 1,258 | 983 | 636 | 365 |
| Greek Turkish land border | 16,789 | 14,461 | 8,787 | 47,088 | 54,974 | 30,433 |
| Greek Turkish sea border | 16,781 | 30,149 | 27,685 | 6,204 | N/A* | N/A* |
| Crete | 2,245 | 2,961 | 2,859 | 2,444 | 1,640 | 2,834 |
| Rest of the country | 29,799 | 54,245 | 45,037 | 40,237 | 29,372 | 31,151 |
| TOTAL | 112,364 | 146,337 | 126,145 | 132,524 | 99,368 | 76,878 |

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

* Due to their small numbers, apprehensions in 2011 and 2012 are most likely included in the rest of the country. Source: Greek police data, www.astynomia.gr

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. In fact, between 2007-2012 a total of 189,151 have been readmitted for entry through the Northern borders and the majority of those refers to entries from Albania (see Table 3).

Table 3. Greek Requests for Readmission to Greece's Northern Neighbours (2006-2012)

| Year | Readmissions |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 2007 | 51,114 |
| 2008 | 48,252 |
| 2009 | 43,977 |
| 2010 | 35,127 |
| 2011 | 5,922 |
| 2012 | 4,759 |

Source: Greek Police, 2013

On the other hand, readmission of those apprehended at the Greek Turkish land and sea borders significantly less, despite the Readmission Protocol with Turkey, signed in 2002. During the period 2006-2012 out of 5,686 requests made by Greek authorities concerning 122,437 cases, 12,326 cases (10.1%) were accepted by the Turkish authorities but only 3,805 people (3.1%) were effectively readmitted in Turkey (see table 4 below).

Table 4. Greek Requests for Readmission Towards Turkey (2006-2012)

| Greek Readmission Requests | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Year | Requests | Number of persons for readmission | Accepted Readmissions | Realized Readmissions (physical returns) |
| 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 | 295 | 10.198 | 1.457 | 501 |
| 2011 | 276 | 18.758 | 1.552 | 730 |
| 2012 | 292 | 20.464 | 823 | 113 |
| 2013³ | 24 | 436 | 78 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 5.686 | 122.437 | 12.326 | 3.805 |

Source: Greek police, 2013

There are many problems in the implementation of the Readmission Protocol with Turkey. Firstly, Turkey tends to accept the return only of third country nationals it shares direct borders with (i.e. Georgia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia). It essentially imposes de facto geographical limitations on readmissions, similar to the reservations it retains on the 1951 Convention (also geographically limited). Secondly, according to police data it tends to delay response to readmission requests, exhausting the time-limit incorporated in the Protocol and thereby cancelling out the readmission process. Despite a joint Greek-Turkish statement

³ The first 2 months

(signed on May 2010) to accept about 1000 readmission requests⁴ per year, this has also not come into effect. The opening of the port of Dikelia (Izmir) to accept readmitted persons, from 2010 to 2012 has also proven ineffective, with physical readmissions of only 17 persons out of 2.144 requested.

The ineffectiveness of the Protocol is further compounded by the nationalities arriving on Greek soil. If one looks at the main nationalities of apprehended migrants, it becomes obvious that they fall outside the geographical limitations imposed in reality by Turkey (see table 5).

Table 5. Apprehensions of irregular migrants in Greece (at the borders and within the country, five main nationality groups) 2009-2013

| 2009 | | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 ⁵ | |
|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| Albania | 63,563 | Albania | 50,175 | Afghanistan | 28,528 | Afghanistan | 16,584 | Albania | 10,967 |
| Afghanistan | 17,828 | Afghanistan | 28,299 | Pakistan | 19,975 | Pakistan | 11,136 | Syria | 5,623 |
| Palestine | 10,763 | Pakistan | 8,830 | Albania | 11,733 | Albania | 10,602 | Afghanistan | 4,871 |
| Somalia | 7,710 | Palestine | 7,561 | Bangladesh | 5,416 | Syria | 7,927 | Pakistan | 3,142 |
| Iraq | 7,662 | Algeria | 7,336 | Algeria | 5,398 | Bangladesh | 7,863 | Bangladesh | 1,138 |

Source: Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen, www.astynomia.gr for all years cited here.

5. Composition and Features of the Immigrant Population

As detailed data on the migrant population from the 2011 national census are not yet available, we use the LFS data for a closer look at the main socio-demographic features of the immigrant population residing in Greece. Table 6 below presents the national composition of the migrant population in Greece in 2012, based on the Labour Force Survey data as well as data from the Ministry of Interior's database on valid stay permits for third country nationals and for intra-EU migrants.

⁴ This refers to submitted requests, not persons. One request may incorporate as many as a couple of thousand or as less as a dozen people.

⁵ The first 9 months

Table 6: National Composition of the Migrant Population in 2012

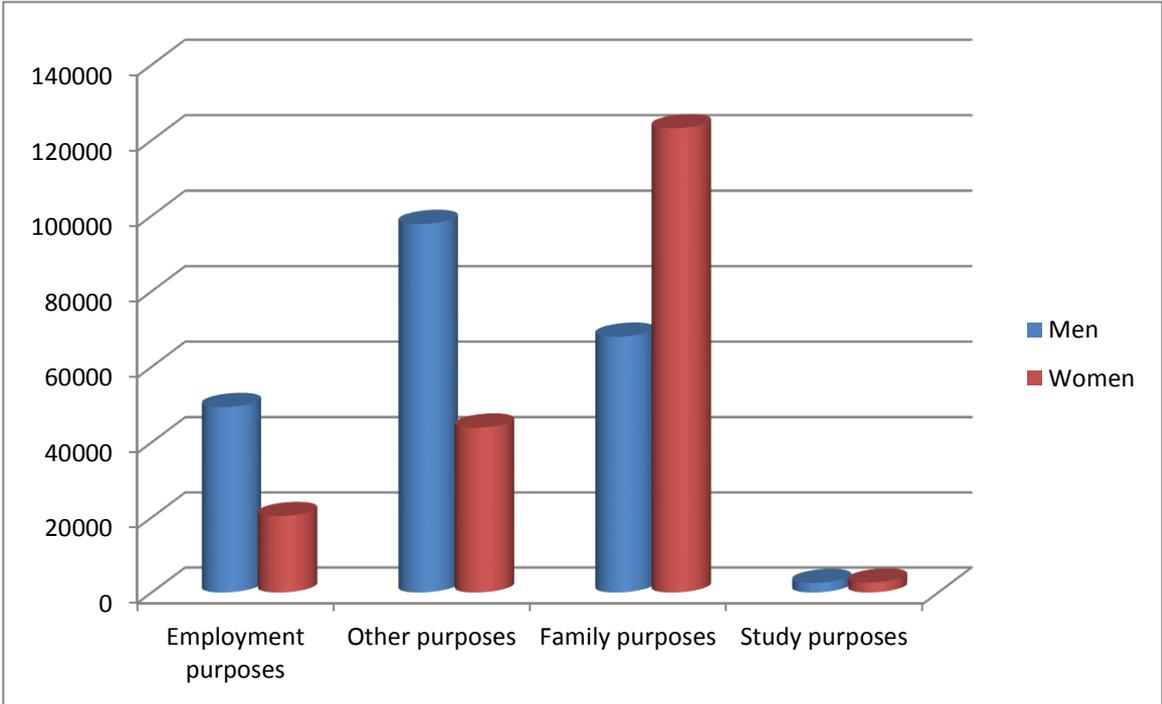
| Country of Origin | Labour Force Survey 4 th trimester 2012 | | TCN valid permits December 2012 | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Albania | 471,470 | 59.82% | 300,839 | 68,35% |
| Bulgaria | 38,382 | 4.87% | | |
| Georgia | 23,482 | 2.97% | 13,596 | 3,09% |
| Romania | 38,469 | 4.88% | | |
| Pakistan | 24,488 | 3.10% | 12,940 | 2,94% |
| Russia | 15,088 | 1.91% | 11,772 | 2,67% |
| Ukraine | 10,714 | 1.35% | 16,698 | 3,79% |
| Bangladesh | 7,525 | 0.95% | 5,025 | 1,14% |
| Syria | 13,438 | 1.70% | 5,920 | 1,35% |
| Armenia | 7,500 | 0.95% | 4,914 | 1,12% |
| Cyprus | 11,207 | 1.42% | | |
| Poland | 11,299 | 1,43% | | |
| Egypt | 10,421 | 1.32% | 10,775 | 2,45% |
| Iraq | 1,147 | 0.14% | 644 | 0,15% |
| India | 5,448 | 0.69% | 10,806 | 2,46% |
| UK | 9,548 | 1.21% | | |
| Germany | 5,242 | 0.66% | | |
| Moldova | 1,385 | 0.17% | 9,266 | 2,11% |
| Netherlands | 1,145 | 0.14% | | |
| Philippines | 9,936 | 1.26% | 8,363 | 1,90% |
| OTHER | 50,787 | 8.98% | 33,888 | 7,70% |
| TOTAL | 768,122 | 100.00% | 440,118 | 100.00% |

Sources: National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 4th trimester 2012; Ministry of Interior, Valid Stay Permits on 31 December 2012.

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 (see Table 6 above). Comparing these data with those from the 2011 census we realise though that the Bulgarian community is double the size of the LFS estimate, with more than 75,000 people registered at the census, the Romanian community is larger than the LFS estimate by about 20% (standing at 46,000 persons). Ukrainians and Pakistanis are also more numerous (17,000 Ukrainians and 34,000 Pakistanis) according to census data and so are the Georgians (27,000 at the census). Nonetheless, there were 480,000 Albanians registered at the census, hence just 2% more than those estimated by the LFS. The discrepancies between the LFS and the census data related to the fact that EU citizens often do not register with the authorities, that some groups (e.g. Bulgarians) include also a relatively large number of live in maids that by definition elude LFS calculations, and last but not least that small populations tend to be misrepresented in the LFS data.

Concerning the purpose of third country nationals' staying in Greece (see figure 3 below), 45% of the men hold permits of 10-year or indefinite duration, which are included in the 'other category', followed by permits for family reason (31%) and stay permits for employment purposes (23%) while the vast majority of women hold family reunification permits (65%) followed by 10-year or indefinite duration permits (23%) and employment permits (11%). Student permits are considerably low in number.

Figure 3. Permits of stay by purpose, 31 December 2012



Source: Graph compiled by authors on the basis of data provided by the Ministry of Interior. The other category includes permits of long term duration (10 years or indefinite).

Regarding the settled population, it is worth noting that at the end of 2012, there were 107,000 people holding a 10-year or indefinite duration stay permit. Long-term permits have increased significantly in the last six years (they were 42% more in 2012 compared to 2011, but still accounting for only about one quarter of the total legal migrant population, standing at 440,000 at the end of 2012).

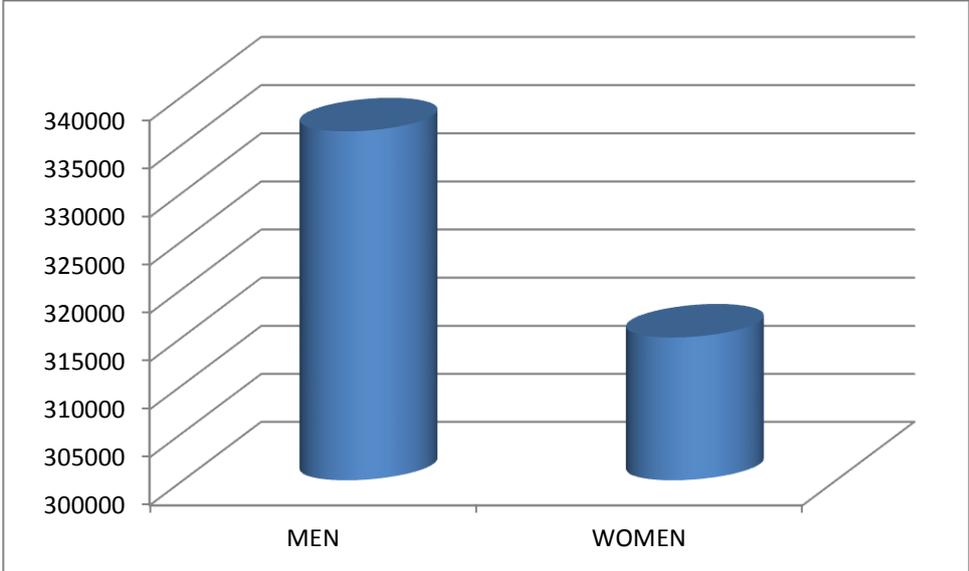
Table 7. Long-Term Permits Issued, 2007-2012

| Type of permit | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Total permits of 10-year or indefinite duration | 821 | 34,296 | 45,998 | 62,312 | 75,377 | 107,080 |

Source: Ministry of Interior database on stay permits, author's own compilation.

As in previous years, the gender composition of the migrant population remains imbalanced – men are much more numerous than women (see figure 4 below). However this imbalance varies among groups. For instance nationalities like Ukrainians or Georgians include more women than men while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are mainly men.

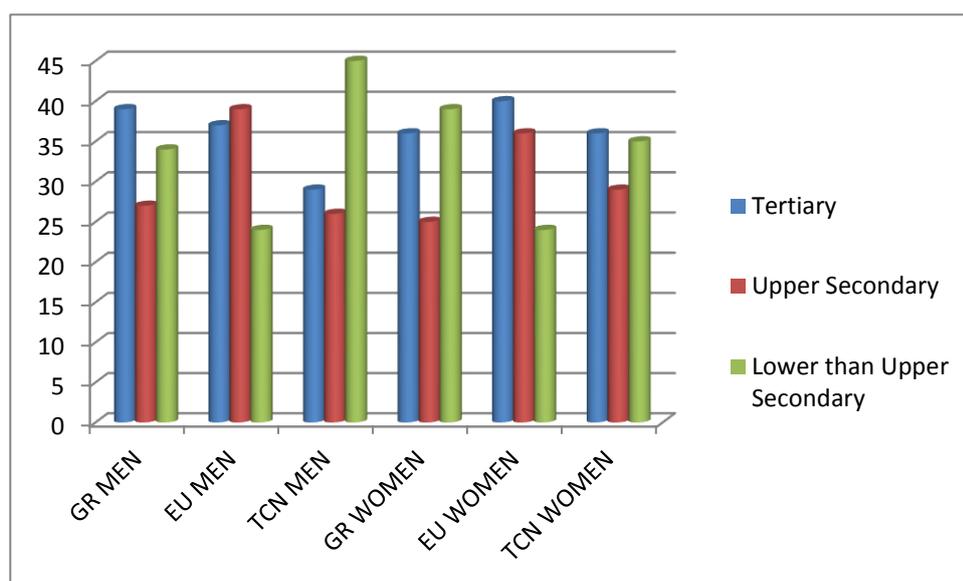
Figure 4. Gender composition of the migrant population, 2012



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), Labour Force Survey, 4th trimester 2012

Regarding the educational level of the migrant population (see figure 5 below), the educational profile of EU citizens is largely similar to that of natives as regards primary education. But they include higher shares with secondary or technical education (indeed a type of education that was quite common in Communist countries) and lower proportions who have attended University than natives. By contrast immigrants from non EU countries are overall less educated than natives or EU citizens with significantly higher levels who have finished only lower middle school (the obligatory schooling). The percentage of third country nationals with a University diploma is also quite low. Despite these differences in educational qualifications between non-EU migrants (third country nationals, TCNs) and EU citizens, we should note that the sectors of migrant employment in Greece are generally the same for both groups (construction, agriculture, other low skill jobs, transport services for men; cleaning, caring, catering, tourism for women).

Figure 5. Educational Level by Nationality Group and Gender, 2012 (%)⁶



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), Labour Force Survey, 4th trimester 2012

6. Labour Market Participation of Immigrants at Times of Crisis

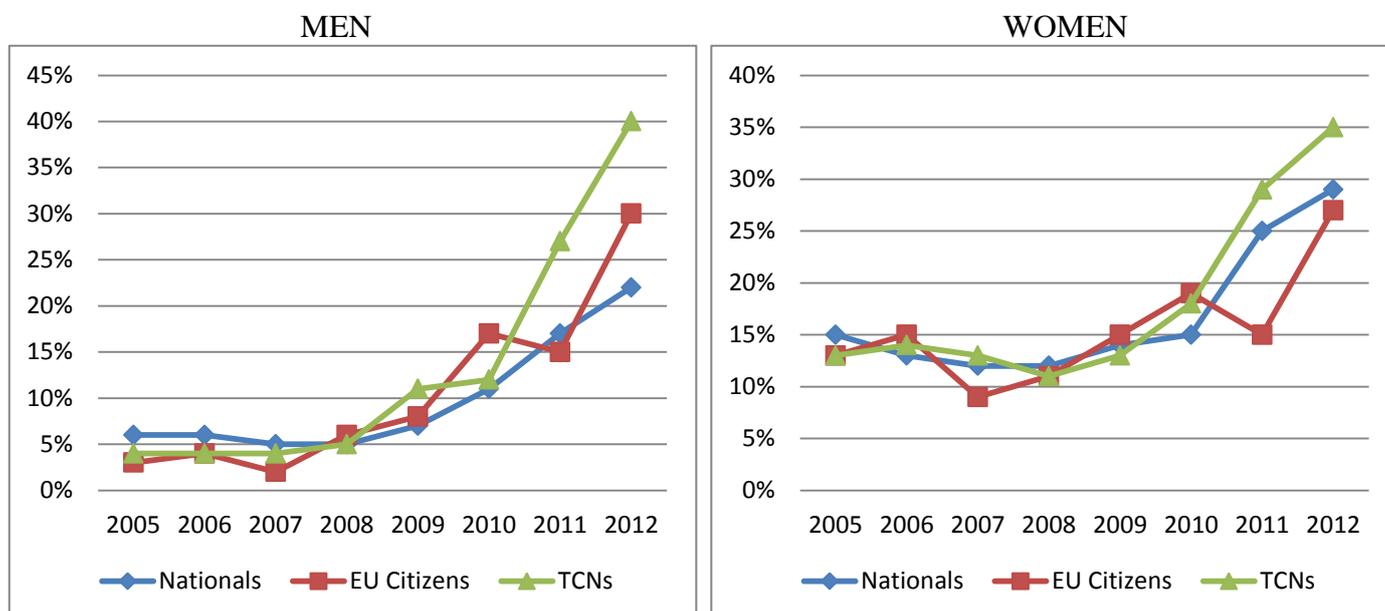
Regarding the employment and unemployment rates of third country nationals and intra EU migrants, until 2009, Greece presented a typical southern European pattern: relatively high levels of unemployment (between 8% and 10%) among nationals coexisted with low unemployment rates among foreign workers (8% on average but only 5% for men from third countries as well as for male intra EU migrants (3%).

The pattern had a relatively simple explanation, rather common among southern European countries: the Greek labour market was characterized by high segmentation with special employment niches occupied by migrant workers. The native population's living standards had increased in recent decades and there was widespread participation in tertiary and higher education. Thus, young Greeks preferred to wait for employment which conformed to their skills, while being financially supported by their families, rather than take up a low-prestige, low-skilled, and low-paying job.

However, the situation started changing in early 2009 and the change has become remarkable in 2011-2012. As shown in Figure 6, Labour Force Survey data for the period 2009-2012 show a spectacular rise in unemployment for both immigrant men and women (mainly TCNs). Immigrant men jumped from nearly full employment to 8% (EU citizens) and 11% (TCNs) in 2009, reaching 30% (EU citizens) and an alarming 40% (TCNs) in the last trimester of 2012. Actually, male TCNs have resisted the crisis and registered only 14% unemployment in 2010 (up 2 percentage points from 2009) but the situation exploded after since then. Their current unemployment has nearly quadrupled compared with 2009. Male EU citizens resisted the crisis until 2011, but the situation exploded in 2012, with 30% unemployment at the end of the year.

⁶ Refers to persons between 16 and 64.

Figure 6. Unemployment rates by nationality and gender 2005-2012



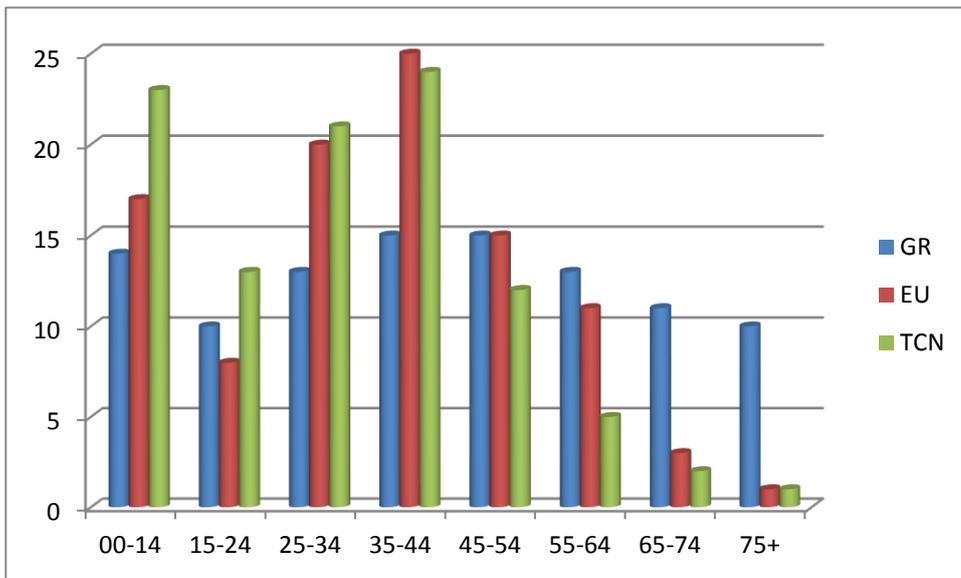
Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), Labour Force Survey, 4th trimester each year, available from www.statistics.gr.

Women with a higher unemployment rate, on average between 11% and 13% in 2009, also climbed to a worrying 35% (female TCNs) and 27% (female EU citizens). In the case of women, the following observation is necessary: many migrant women from third countries were working in the informal labour market (e.g. as cleaners or carers without contracts and welfare stamps) and were insured under their husbands' work and welfare fund. This explains the relatively high levels of official unemployment during the period 2005-2008. What we probably notice in recent years is that migrant women who had jobs with contracts and insurance are now losing them and their unemployment rate climbs. Looking closer into the unemployment rates by age we note that younger people are dramatically affected by unemployment with peaks above 30% for all groups 29 or younger (with the exception of EU nationals in the 25-29 age bracket).

The youngest are particularly hit by unemployment. This is partly an endemic feature of the Greek labour market as unemployment rates for people under 24 years of age have been consistently high (over 20%) in the period 2005-2010. However in the last trimester of 2012 (see figure 7 above) they climb to over 50%.

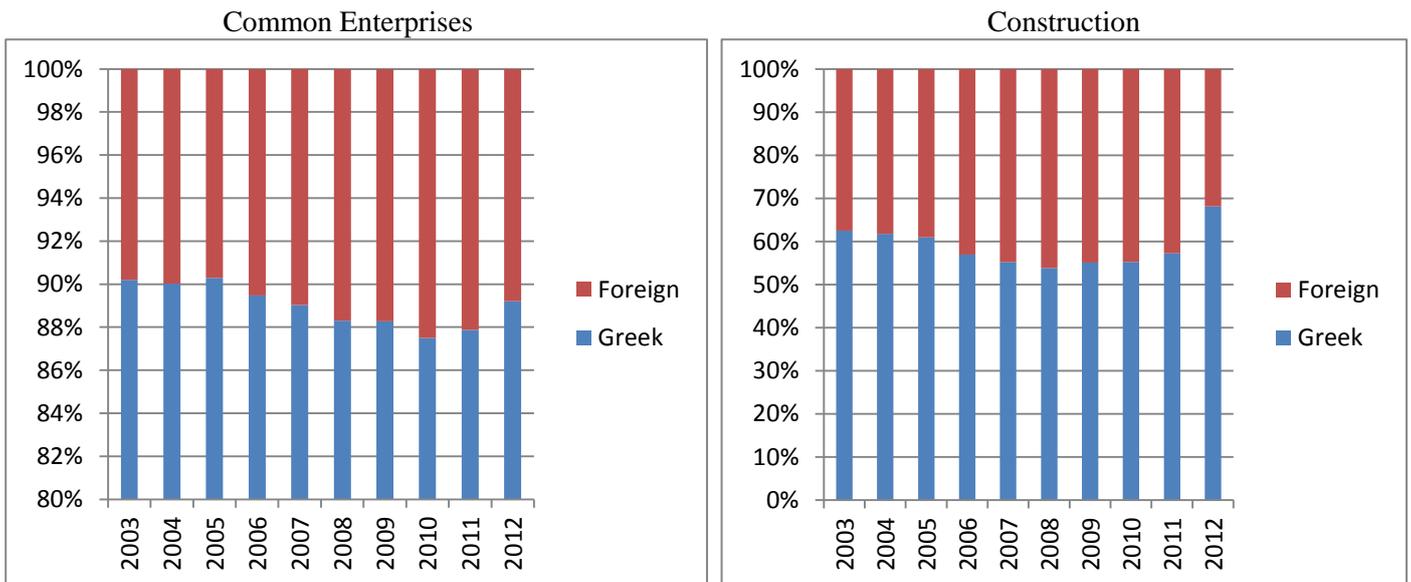
A more detailed look into the labour market situation of third country nationals who are dependent employees can be given through data from the major national welfare fund insuring dependent employees (IKA, Social Insurance Institute). In June 2012, approximately 11% of those insured were foreign nationals and the percentage was much higher in the construction sector where foreign workers accounted for 41%, yet, the percentages of insured immigrants have dropped in comparison to 2011 (See figure 8 below).

Figure 7: Unemployment rates by nationality group and age, 2012



Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, LFS, 4th Trimester 2012

Figure 8: Insured Workers by Nationality in Percentages, 2003-2012



Source: IKA, June 2003-2012, available at www.ika.gr

In summary, it comes as no surprise that the Greek economy is shrinking and that unemployment has been quickly rising, both for natives and for third country nationals. The employment prospects for both men and women from non EU countries are rather bleak as they are doubly hit by the crisis. Men suffer because of the crisis in the construction sector, in public works and in transport which has left them out of work. Women start suffering too, however, as the crisis is hitting now also middle class Greek families who start from cutting off cleaning and caring services usually provided by foreign women. There is a slight albeit not dramatic decrease in registered wages according to the Labour Force Survey Data for the

fourth trimester of each year up to 2011, however qualitative research (Triandafyllidou 2011: 14) suggests otherwise

“Both construction workers and cleaning persons or house maids note that daily wages have significantly decreased. As regards male workers, wages at the construction sector have been reduced from 50 Euro plus welfare stamps to 30-40 Euro for a day’s work without insurance (..) For cleaning work the daily wage used to be 40-45 Euro without welfare contributions and now it has gone down to 30 Euro or even less. Live in maids used to work for 800 Euro but now they accept 500 or 600 Euro and feel a lot of insecurity as to whether they can keep their job, or whether they can find a new job if they become unemployed (Int.37 and 38, two women from Bulgaria; Int. 41-44, Georgian women, Int. 45 Ukrainian woman) while for live-out maids working full time for one employer wages also are approximately 600 to 700 Euro (i.e. the equivalent of the minimum net salary).”⁷

There are no studies demonstrating this yet but there is anecdotal evidence that Greeks are going back to tourism and catering jobs that they were previously outsourcing to migrant workers. Thus, we are noticing an overall significant reduction of the demand for migrant labour in the typical niche sectors – such demand is simply disappearing (in the case of cleaning and caring, being replaced by unpaid domestic work by family members) or being met by native workers (in tourism and catering). However, we have no sufficient qualitative and quantitative evidence on these labour market mechanisms so far.

Our outline of the composition and features of the immigrant population in Greece suggests that immigration has acquired the character of a long-term phenomenon in Greece. Immigrants have integrated into the labour market initially in the so called 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and demanding) but have also experienced upwards mobility in the last decade. The situation however has changed in the last three years with the onset of the economic crisis. Many of the immigrant jobs were lost as they were in the sectors that were most badly hit by the crisis notably construction, transport, and retail.

7. Recent Developments in Greek Migration Policy

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 measures 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. Integration measures have been mostly on paper but in practice rather minimal.

In the section that follows, we review the main migration policy developments in the last couple of years as regards irregular migration and enforcement efforts, the management of migration as per the currently discussed new migration bill, and issues of integration.

⁷ The results presented here come from the paper: Triandafyllidou, A. (2011) Migrant Livelihoods during the Greek crisis, presented at the Conference on migration policies in Southern Europe and the Balkans co-organised by the Institute of Strategic and Development Studies – Andreas Papandreou (ISTAME) and the University of Leicester on 19 December 2011. The data presented in the paper refer to interviews conducted with migrants in the spring and summer of 2011. A revised version of this paper is forthcoming in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: Triandafyllidou, A. Migrant Livelihoods during the Greek Crisis. Coping Strategies and the Decision to Return.

7.1.Irregular migration and Asylum Policies

During the past five years, Greece has become “famous” in Europe for its failing asylum system which was characterised by inappropriate processing of the applications (impossibility to access the relevant service and file an application, no information given at border areas or when apprehended, once an application was filed, decisions mainly taken on the basis of the (safe or unsafe) country of origin, no substantial asylum interviews, overall process mishandled by non trained police persons, no political will to improve things). In addition there was a major concern with the inhuman and degrading conditions of detention of pending asylum seekers and about the fact that when they were released wither with a pink card (temporary permit allowing them to stay in Greece while their application was processed, renewable every six months) they were left to their own devices.⁸

The socialist government that came into power in November 2009 introduced Presidential Decree 114/2010 in an effort to process the backlog of asylum applications that had formed during the previous years and which exceeded 45,000 at the end of 2009. In addition, Law 3907/2011 passed by the Greek Parliament in January 2011 introduced two separate Agencies, the Asylum Agency and the Agency for First Reception. It thus set new standards concerning the first reception of irregular migrants, the distinction between irregular migrants and asylum seekers, the processing of asylum applications, the waiting period for the judgment of these applications, and, most importantly, took the asylum committees out of the authority of the Greek police (which had basically taken over the whole asylum system since 2008).

The new asylum agency (the first asylum office started operating though with a 2.5 year delay, in June 2013) is autonomous and decentralised (with several regional offices). First Reception Centres are being constructed in selected places where there is a notable inflow of immigrants (the first of these centres started operating in March 2013 in the northeastern land border of Greece, near the Evros river. One more mobile reception centre is currently in preparation (most likely to be deployed on the island of Lesbos).

These first reception centres receive irregular migrants upon their arrival and refer asylum seekers to the regional asylum office that (should) function within the local reception centre. The regional asylum offices (yet to be created) will be responsible for receiving and processing the applications, conducting interviews, and issuing decisions at the first instance, within a time limit of 30 days.

Law 3907/2011 also implements two kinds of new permits for irregular migrants and asylum seekers: a formal toleration status for people who have been issued a return decision but cannot be returned to their country of origin, and a new type of permit for exceptional reasons

⁸ Greece had been under the spotlight because of its continuing inability to provide effective protection to asylum seekers arriving at its shores and having to be handled in Greek territory in line with the Dublin II regulation. Already on 31 January 2009, the European Commission had started infringement Proceedings with Greece because of its failure to implement the Dublin II regulation, bringing the country in front of the European Court of Justice. The infringement concerned mainly the fact that Greece lacked legal guarantees for a substantial examination of the application of asylum claimants. On 21 January 2011 the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found that Greece's broken asylum system and appalling detention conditions meant that Belgium's transfer of an Afghan asylum seeker to Greece in 2009 under the Dublin II Regulation had breached the prohibition on ill-treatment and denied him an effective remedy (Triandafyllidou and Dimitriadi 2011).

that is given to irregular migrants who have been living in Greece for twelve years or more and in particular continuously for ten years before their application for such a permit. The same law also opens up the possibility of viable voluntary return for irregular migrants. When the migrant declares their will and a decision of voluntary return is issued, the new law allows the migrant to stay for a period of up to one year, so as to make voluntary return feasible for the migrant.

Alongside improvements in its asylum and irregular migration management policy, Greece has improved its border controls. Indeed, the rising number of apprehensions generally indicates not only irregular migration or asylum seeking pressures at the borders of Greece (or the presence of irregular migrants within the country) but also the enforcement efforts of the authorities. Greece has beefed up its border controls during the last five years. In fall 2007, the Greek border guard 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 stayed there until March 2011), Project Attica which operates in the area of voluntary returns, and six long term stationed focal points.

In 2012, in response to pressures from the EU but also the continuous arrivals of irregular migrants, Greece further tightened border controls through Operation 'Shield' (*Aspida*) involving the transfer of 1,800 border guards to the region of Evros, concluded the building of a border fence across the 12.5 km used as the main entry point, increased passport controls and upgraded technologically the harbours of Patra and Igoumenitsa - main exit points to Italy (thus turning to better 'fencing' measures).

Most of the migrants 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 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 (see also Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012).

Standard practices of interception both at maritime and land borders include disembarkation, first aid and health checks, transfer to police station for identity checks (for those without documents) and detention. Detention particularly, is a hotly debated issue in Greece. The country was heavily criticized for its detention facilities on the islands⁹, particularly in Lesbos. It has also been criticized for detaining asylum seekers¹⁰, a practice which in 2012 not only continued but also was strengthened, through the modification of the Presidential Decree 114/2010 that enables the detention of asylum seekers for 12 months (rather than 3 and under special circumstances 6 months in place until then). This is unlikely to contribute to the efficient processing of asylum claims; it is however seen as a deterrent for asylum

⁹ For the situation at Greek detention centers see ProAsyl (2007), Human Rights Watch (2008), Frontex (September 2011).

¹⁰ UNHCR (18 October 2012) 'Η κράτηση των αιτούντων άσυλο δεν πρέπει να αποτελεί γενικευμένη πρακτική αλλά εξαιρετικό μέτρο' ('Detention of asylum seekers should not be the norm but the exception'), URL: <http://www.unhcr.gr/nea/artikel/b007e6faf3f8f128db0b7075b5aafe33/ypati-armosteia-i-k.html>, 9/2/2013 in Greek.

applications since migrants are informed that upon lodging an application they will be detained longer and are thus, discouraged from doing so.

On the other hand it is important to note that apprehension and temporary detention do not lead to effective expulsion/return for Asian and African immigrants, though significant steps have been taken to ensure returns. Returns fall under three categories- forced expulsions, sometimes with police escort, voluntary returns, and assisted returns through the police. Albanian citizens apprehended by the Greek authorities are effectively expelled from the country; however things become difficult in relation to Asian and African nationals who have to first be identified, receive travel documents (this by extension requires cooperation with their respective embassies) and often apply for asylum-according to police data-as means of stalling the deportation order. Police data concerning 2009¹¹ show that while 70% of the Albanian citizens apprehended by the Greek authorities are effectively expelled, 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).

Since 2008, Greece has in total deported (i.e. expelled without consent) 86,934 persons, primarily to Albania but also to countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. In fact, in 2012 alone, Greece returned both voluntarily and forcefully (through police) 11,034 persons, with another 4,759 readmissions, making altogether 15,793 persons returned to their countries of origin. On the other hand, returns remain significantly lower than apprehensions, which can be explained possibly by two things. Firstly, immigrants apply for asylum as a way of circumventing deportation, since the process stops pending examination of the claim. Considering the Greek asylum system, the migrant has the potential of remaining in the country for at least a couple of years before being reconsidered for expulsion. Secondly, many apprehended and detained fail to receive travel documents since embassies tend to cooperate with issuing documents only to those who wish to return. Failure to receive travel documents means that the migrants will eventually be released with a 'pending' deportation order and will likely remain in the country undocumented.

7.2. Migration Management: The Migration Code and a New Codification of Stay Permits

The immigration law currently in force was voted on 23 August 2005 by the then conservative government in power (law no. 3386/2005) with a view to updating the migration legislation and incorporating into the national legal order the EU Directives 2003/86 (on the right to family reunification) and 2003/109 (on the status of long-term residents). This law has been in force since 1.1.2006 but was modified in February 2007 by law 3536/2007.¹²

¹¹ <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/STATS/011009meta16.pdf>

¹² Both previous laws (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.

Currently there is a new bill called the Migration Code, creating a single text that incorporates all relevant legal provisions concerning immigration, under discussion in Parliament.

The new Migration Code like the previous migration laws, 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 Migration Code aims to simplify and organize the different types of stay permits into six categories: stay permits for work or professional reasons; temporary stay permits: stay permits for humanitarian or exceptional reasons; stay permits for study, training or voluntary work; stay permits for victims of trafficking or human smuggling; stay permits for family reunification, and stay permits of long duration.

This categorization follows the relevant European logic for stay permits and the Code transposes into national law the relevant EU directives for family reunification, migration for study or vocational training, migration of researchers, the Blue Card directive and so on. Indeed, there are no major innovative elements in the field of stay permits for work purposes (salaried or freelance). There is some encouragement of investment, as people who make important investments (albeit the minimum sum of this investment is not specified in the law) may bring with them and receive permits for up to ten highly skilled person that will work in relation to the investment. These people like also generally highly skilled migrants may bring their families with them and receive permits for their family members immediately and do not have to wait (like other migrants) for settling down and applying for family reunification.

There are a few novelties in the Migration Code as regards stay permits. A first novelty is the codification in the law of the document (*βεβαίωση*) that certifies that a third country national has submitted a complete application for the issuing or renewal of a stay permit. This “certification” is valid for 12 months and amounts to a temporary stay permit as it can be used for all purposes within the country (but does not allow travelling within the Schengen area for instance).

Second, the new categorization of stay permits incorporates also the new permits for humanitarian reasons foreseen in law 3907/2011, as well as the temporary permits for people that agree to voluntarily return to their countries of origin (law 3907/2011). There is an important development here (article 19 of the migration code) as regards the toleration status of people that are illegally staying in Greece and who cannot be returned to their countries of origin (the so called non-removables or non-returnables). The migration code foresees that their toleration status can be converted to a special permit for humanitarian reasons, subject to some conditions. In other words the migration code further develops and specifies the categories of people that can receive permits for humanitarian reasons in the light of the Returns Directive. It also includes (section 1. Point *η*, of article 19) that parents of a Greek citizen who is a minor can receive a one year permit renewable, can work and can later convert to a different type of permit.

Third, section 2 of article 19 also makes explicit the provisions for unaccompanied minors and victims of labour or other accidents. Point e (section 2, art. 19) also specifies a special type of permit for minors who are born in Greece or who have studied in a Greek school for at least six years. Upon reaching the age of majority, these people, notably Greece’s second generation of migrants can receive a one year permit which allows them to work.

Fourth, Article 20 codifies stay permits for exceptional reasons (separately hence for those of humanitarian reasons) and further develops the provisions of law 3907/2011 (outlined briefly

above) as regards the regularization of people who have lived in Greece and have developed “special and strong ties with the country”. This article expands the scope of the previous provisions and introduces two types of tacit and continuous regularization: in the first case, the TCN has entered Greece legally in the past three years but is now undocumented. In the second scenario, the person can prove that s/he has been living in Greece for the past 10 years but is now undocumented. In either case, ties with the country, knowledge of the language, having children that have studied in Greek schools, periods of welfare insurance and hence legal work are elements that can support the application for such a type of stay permit for exceptional reasons.

Last but not least, the Migration Code seeks to streamline the management of permits, work and insurance issues for seasonal migrants working in agriculture or the fisheries. These are both areas of seasonal migration from neighbouring countries (Egypt for the fisheries, and Albania or other Balkan countries for agricultural work).

The new Migration Code continues to prohibit Greek public services (article 27), local authorities, 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.

Overall the above developments and novelties are positive in that they seek to streamline the management of permits and to re-regularise people who have lost their status because of unemployment or other problems but are settled in Greece. It also seeks to clarify the situation of non-removables and give them some sense of stability and legality. The migration code is particularly stingy though in its stay permit provisions that touch upon wider migrant integration issues. It gives however an extremely short term relief to parents of Greek citizens with the one year renewable permit as well as no sense of long term perspective in the country for Greece’s second generation. People who are born and/or raised in Greece are given only a one year renewable permit with a view to securing their legal status regardless of work or study purposes but are not given any sense of citizenship acquisition perspective or a recognition by the state that they are indeed integral part of Greek society and the Greek constituency. This issue is however discussed in some more length below with regard to migrant integration issues.

In addition the criminalization of state employees including doctors in hospitals for instance, who provide services to irregular migrants (contrary that is to the prohibition of article 27, see above) as well as of those who rent accommodation to irregular migrants (article 30, paragraph 1) and the obligation of hotel and other tourist accommodation owners to inform the police about the arrival and departure of third country nationals (art.30, paragraph 2) point to an increased emphasis to internal controls over undocumented stay. This development can be interpreted as an effort to clear the situation, notably to regularize (as per the new permits outlined above) those who have ties to the country, cannot be returned and/or have other special conditions that commend their stay in Greece, and, on the other hand, to make the lives of all other undocumented migrants particularly difficult. The success however of such criminalization measures is dubious as the experience of Italy and its security decree (2009) and the Lampedusa tragic events of October 2013 (as well as many previous incidents) show (see also Triandafyllidou 2013, Policy Paper, Oct. 2013).

The Migration Code introduces important improvements in the simplification and codification of the legal provisions and in fully aligning Greek legislation with relevant EU directives but it remains a management law rather than one that has a sense of perspective for Greek society and its changed demographic composition (as this is confirmed also by the 2011 census data).

7.3. Management of Labour Migration: The procedure of inviting a foreign worker (*metaklisi*)

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 had sought to rationalise the system of inviting foreign workers to Greece (article 14). It foresaw 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, determined '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, paragraph 4). Employers who wished to invite an immigrant worker needed to apply to their municipality by the 30th 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 invitation procedure was extremely complex and time-consuming as it included a whole series of market tests, checks and different decisions by different bodies (the Ministry of Labour, the Prefecture, the Employment Organisation OAED etc). 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 Marouf of 2008) including the Municipality of Athens, the (then) Department of Stay Permits in the 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 as the overall period for inviting a worker could last up to 18 months.

The new Migration Code keeps largely this *metaklisi* system intact. The planning of labour market vacancies is now planned to take place every 2 years, towards the end of the year. Then employers must specify their needs (in terms of number of workers, nationality and region where they will be employed) during the first semester of the following year. In the new procedure, there is an implicit acceptance that the whole invitation system takes up to 18 months to be completed. However, there is no consideration that this 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 came from across the border with Albania, the FYROM or Bulgaria and only traveled a few hundred kilometers, the invitation procedure had worked

relatively well (Triandafyllidou and Marouf of 2008). Farmers tended to employ the same workers every year, so they made nominal requests for specific workers to the municipality. The needs were roughly the same every year and hence there was no need for labour market tests with OAED that would further delay the procedure. A more recent study (Maroukis and Gemi 2011) shows that the system of seasonal invitations has also been at times abused by both employers and workers from neighbouring Albania to cater either for other sectors that are seasonal in nature (e.g. construction work or tourism jobs in the islands) or as a way of entering Greece for a longer stay.

8. Migrant Integration: Recent Policy Developments and their Impact

8.1.Reform of Greek Citizenship Law and Local Voting Rights for TCNs

Greek nationality has been based predominantly on the *jus sanguinis* principle and, until March 2010, the naturalization procedure was long, costly, and with a very uncertain outcome even for applicants who satisfied the requirements. In practice, naturalization was an option almost exclusively for people of Greek ethnic origin from the former Soviet Republics. Other immigrants, including Albanian citizens of Greek ethnicity (the so called *Voreioipirotes*), could apply after ten years of legal residence distributed in the last 12 calendar years. Implementation was, however, particularly restrictive, and citizenship acquisitions were counted in two-digit numbers (see table 8 below).

In November 2006, a joint decision by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs facilitated the naturalization procedure for ethnic Greek Albanians, which waived the fee and the discretionary character of the naturalization judgment. That decision was passed largely without debates as it was congruous with the predominant conception of the Greek nation: Greeks are those of Greek descent, not those who live in Greece (if they are of non-Greek origins). During the period 2007-2009, approximately 44,750 people acquired Greek citizenship, the vast majority of whom were ethnic Greek Albanian citizens.

When the Socialist party came to power in October 2009, it quickly proceeded to change the citizenship law, in keeping with its electoral promises, to facilitate naturalization for non-Greek origin immigrants. Thus, in March 2010 the Greek Parliament voted in a new law (law n. 3838/2010) on citizenship and naturalization. The new law lowered the requirement for naturalization from 10 to 7 years of legal residence in Greece. Immigrants who wish to naturalize, however, must first obtain the long term EU migrant status for which they can apply after five years of legal stay. The requirements for naturalization have been lowered although they still include knowledge of the Greek language and culture. By contrast to the previous law, the authorities are required to reply to applicants within a certain timeframe, and to justify their decision.

Table 8. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship (2000-2012)

| Year | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010-2012 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Naturalizations | 66 | 58 | 52 | 36 | 23 | 66 | 68 | 10,806 | 16,922 | 17,019 | 13,425 |

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2011 data provided upon author's request. For 2010-2012 data received upon request by the Greek Parliament as they were provided by the vice Minister of Interior, H. Athanasopoulos, in response to a parliamentary question of MPs I. Dimaras and G. Abramidis, on 14 March 2013.

Concerning second generation immigrants, the 2010 law provided for children born in Greece of foreign parents to become Greek citizens through a simple declaration of their parents, provided that both parents have been living in Greece legally for at least five years. If one of the parents does not fulfill the requirement, the declaration can still 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 live in Greece and have completed at least six years of schooling in the country may also be naturalized with a simple declaration by their parents provided again that both parents have been living in Greece legally for at least five years. Citizenship acquisition of migrant children may also make their parents' lives easier: as parents of Greek citizens they are entitled to a five-year renewable permit, regardless of their employment situation, as this is in the best interest of the child who is a Greek citizen.

In addition to reforming the citizenship and naturalization rules, law 3838/2010 has introduced full local political rights for foreign residents who have lived legally in Greece for at least five years. However, immigrants who wish to register to vote must also satisfy one of the following conditions: be in possession of a long term EU resident status or a national stay permit of ten years or indefinite duration, be parents of a Greek citizen, married to a Greek or EU citizen, or hold a special identity card issued to ethnic Greeks from Albania.

While the extension of local voting rights to non-EU citizens has been greeted with great satisfaction by center-left parties and by a large part of civil society organizations, its impact so far on migrant political participation has been rather small. The new law introducing these rights was passed in March 2010 and it prescribed that the election lists for the then upcoming local elections of November 2010 be open for registration until the end of August 2010. The aim was to give sufficient time to migrants and co-ethnic Greek Albanians to register to vote. But the number of registrations has been rather small. The total number of immigrants who registered was 10,097, alongside 2,665 co-ethnics from Albania; thus, a total of 12,762 new voters in the November 2010 local election. While it was important that more than 12,000 people were able to exercise their local political rights, it has to be noted that this number was a fraction of the more than 60,000 people that were expected to satisfy the requirement and, certainly, a number too low to shape electoral outcomes in the different municipalities where they voted.

In February 2013 the Council of State declared the above provisions of law 3838/2010 to be anti-constitutional and the Ministry of the Interior announced that the law would be replaced with legislation that would require migrants to show a 'genuine bond' with Greece and prove they had assimilated into Greek culture.

During the last months there have been talks about reforming the citizenship law making the requirements more stringent. Actually the new Minister of Interior Evrypidis Stylianides, soon after he was appointed, has prepared a bill amending the current citizenship law prolonging the required legal stay of parents of a child born in Greece from 5 to 10 years for the child to obtain Greek citizenship. It also prolongs the required length of schooling from 6 to 9 years. It is proposed that children obtain Greek citizenship at age 18 and not upon birth even if these requirements are satisfied. The required length of stay for first generation migrants to apply for citizenship is proposed to go back from 7 to 10 years as it was before. By contrast it is proposed that foreigners who have studied in Greek schools and enter Greek Universities (upon a competitive national exam) should have a preferential path to Greek citizenship. For the time being this bill has not been voted in the Greek Parliament.

9. Public opinion on migration and the rise of the far right in Greece

Surveys conducted in the period 2006 and then annually between 2008 and 2010 (January of each year) by the company Public Issue, sponsored by the large Greek daily Kathimerini (Public Issue 2010) present an ambivalent assessment of migration by lay people (see Table 2.5.1 below)

Table 10: Public Opinion on Immigration in Greece (2006-2010)

| | 2006 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Migration makes a positive contribution to the Greek economy | 54 | 40 | 32 | 30 |
| Migration harms the Greek economy | 34 | 47 | 52 | 59 |
| Migrants do jobs that Greeks do not want to do – agree | 88 | | 48 | 46 |
| Migrants increase unemployment | 56 | | 39 | 45 |
| Migrants do jobs that Greeks do not want to do but also increase unemployment | | | 9 | 8 |
| Local voting rights for immigrants - agree | | | 38 | 46 |
| Disagree | | | 55 | 49 |

Sources: Table compiled by the authors on the basis of data given in Xenios Dias (2006) and Public Issue (2010). The two surveys were conducted by different companies and with different questionnaires. This table presents those questions that were common in the two surveys.

Nearly 60% of the population considers that immigration harms Greece (and only 19% consider that immigrants is good for the country). The same percentage considers that immigration is bad for the Greek economy and only 30% (down from 40% in 2008) think it is good for the Greek economy. A similar percentage (57%) believe that immigration is transforming Greek national identity (understood in a negative sense, *αλλοιώνει*) while 3/4s of the respondents believe that immigration increases crime rates. In contrast to the 2006 survey results, in 2010 less than half (46%) of the Greek respondents believe that immigrants do the jobs that Greeks are not willing to do while nearly 45% believe that immigrants take the jobs of Greek causing unemployment. On a more positive note the 2010 survey showed a slight increase in the percentage of respondents supporting local political rights for non citizens compared to 2009 and a decrease in those against such rights.

In the period after 2009, which has been characterised by the economic crisis, both the political agenda and the public opinion have often shown acute signs of intolerance towards migrants. For instance a survey conducted by Public Issue (2011) in January 2011, shortly after the Minister of Citizen Protection, Christos Papoutsis, announced the construction of a wall along the border zone of Evros showed that, while the whole concept of a wall is negatively charged for the majority of those questioned (it brings to mind the Berlin wall (53%) the East block (20%) or the partition of Cyprus (18%)) and one in six felt they were not at all informed of this plan. Interestingly 46% of the respondents supported that this project is absolutely necessary regardless of its cost and at the same time a similar percentage of respondents (40%) considered the cost unbearable under the circumstances.

While there have not been public opinion surveys in 2011-2012 on migration similar to those reported in table 2.5.1 above, it is worth noting that the far right has experienced a spectacular increase in its electoral force. Two far right parties have emerged in these last 5 years: LAOS

(The People's Orthodox Rally) is an extreme right wing formation that won 5.6% of the vote in 2009 national elections and 7.1% in the elections for the European Parliament. LAOS has participated in the provisional coalition government formed in November 2011 to deal with the crisis; this further legitimised its position in the Greek political system. In the last two elections (May and June 2012) the party has lost most of its voters declining to nearly 1%. LAOS has actually been replaced in voters' preferences by a more extremist group: *Golden Dawn*, is a nationalist far right party whose members have been repeatedly accused of carrying out hate crimes against immigrants, political opponents and ethnic minorities. Golden Dawn, with a clear racist and Nazi political position, operates in 'troubled' urban areas in terms of 'field work' proclaiming to offer security to residents, while violently attacking and terrifying immigrants and refugees. Golden Dawn gained one seat in the Athens municipal council (winning 5.3 % of the local vote) in November 2010 for the first time in its history and gathered nearly 7% of the national vote (in two consecutive national elections on 6 May and 17 June 2012) electing thus 21 members in Parliament (again it is the first time that the party enters Parliament). For both parties migration has been a priority issue and their electoral agenda and influence was highly related to their anti-immigrant and overtly racist discourse.

Since 2009, there has been a rise of hate speech that goes unaccountable voiced by more or less extremist right wing social and political actors. A recent unofficial report initiated by the UNHCR branch in Greece has registered some 63 self-reported incidents of racist violent attacks. In 18 of those there were police officers involved as perpetrators. Interestingly also in 18 cases the perpetrators were simple citizens not members of extremist right wing groups. Actually there have been recent reports by journalists which suggest that many police people are active Golden Dawn supporters.¹³

10. Emigration of Greeks abroad

There has been a lot of discussion as to whether Greeks are emigrating abroad to seek employment since the unemployment average for nationals in the summer of 2013 was at 28% but stands at more than 55% for young persons under 25 years of age. It is difficult to know however whether Greeks are leaving, outside anecdotal evidence as they are not required to register when leaving nor is there any advantage in doing so.

We have however conducted an exploratory study through an e-survey (with both closed and open answers) seeking to understand who is leaving (what is their socio-economic and educational profile, what is their employment situation), where they are going (countries and sectors of work) and why they are leaving. We also inquired about their plans to stay for a short or longer term at destination and whether they move alone or with their families. The results presented here are embargoed until the OECD meeting at the end of November and offer a preliminary descriptive analysis of the study that is currently still ongoing.¹⁴

The Greek database, notably of Greek citizens or residents who have currently already emigrated to another country, includes 919 respondents. The sample, that is not representative

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/oct/12/greece-fascists-beating-people-police> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2012/oct/26/golden-dawn-greece-police-greek-video> for relevant reports in English.

¹⁴ This is a study launched and coordinated by Anna Triandafyllidou at the Global Governance Programme of the European University Institute, together with Ruby Gropas (also of the EUI), Carmen Gonzalez Enriquez of Real Instituto Elcano in Madrid, Joana Azevedo and Joao Peixoto from the Technical University of Lisbon, and Camilla Devitt from TCD, Dublin in Ireland. The study was based on an e-survey which obtained 7,022 valid responses.

includes more men (about 70%) than women, and is roughly equally divided between the under 30 and 31-45 age bracket (48% each age bracket, with only 3% that are aged 46 to 65). Among our respondents 88% have a higher education degree. As regards their educational background, there is a strong representation of engineering, economics/management and IT sciences (between 20 and 25% each) and a lower representation of the social sciences and natural sciences (about 11% each). Most interestingly 41% of our respondents have emigrated from Greece during the past 18 months (jan 2012 to June 2013). The main destination countries are European, notably the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium in this order.

Among those who have participated in our sample, only 21% declared that they were unemployed. Among the reasons for leaving, the most important ones (signaled by half of our respondents) were To improve one’s academic or professional training; because they saw no future in their country (Greece); and to find better business opportunities in the destination country. The fourth most important reason was to try a new experience/a new adventures (signaled by 30% of the respondents) while 28% also signaled the fact that their overall quality of life was rather poor at the origin country.

Figure 9: Semester of emigration from Greece

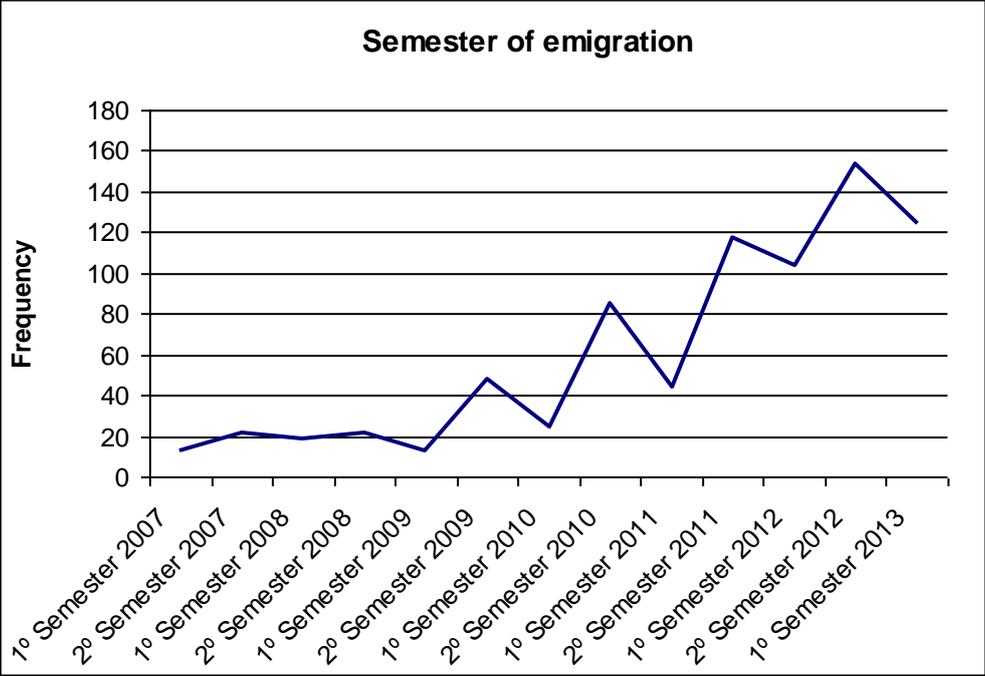
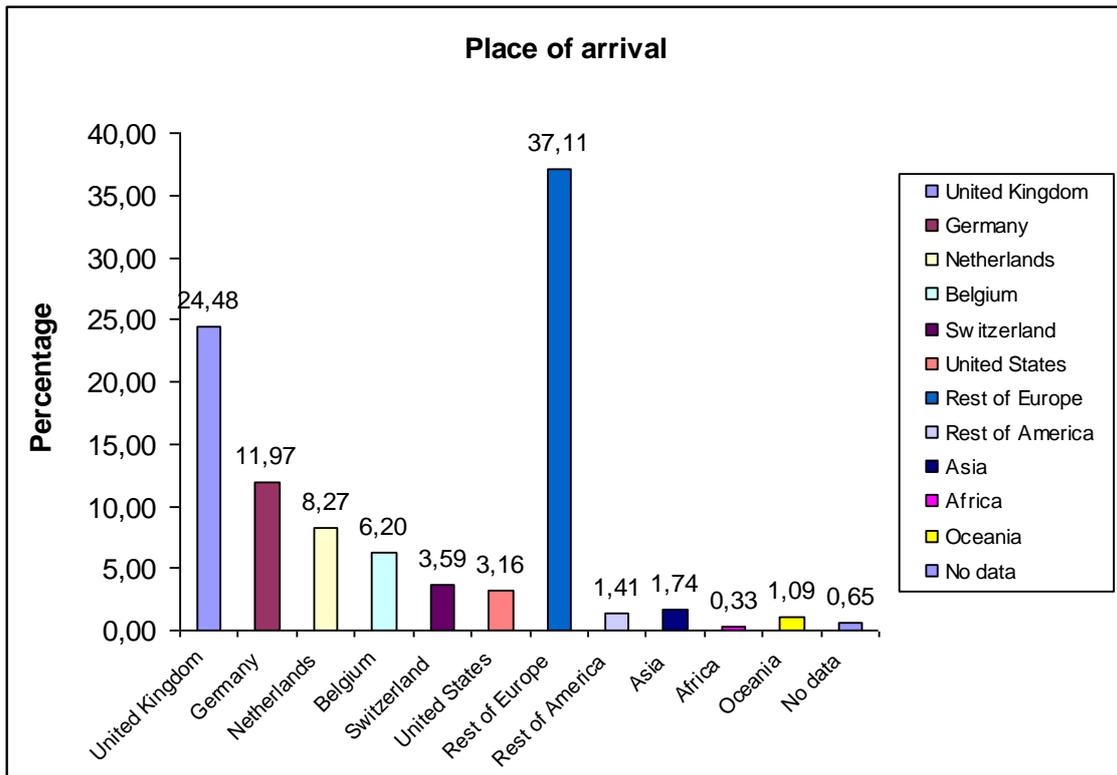


Figure 10: Destination Country



When asked about their future plans, whether they will stay at destination or return, 42% plan to stay for more than 5 years, while 27% would like to stay between one and 5 years. And a surprising 15% plans to move on to a third country. Their sectors of employment are information technology (23%), education and research (15%), provision of services (13%). Among other employment sectors, four stand out: approximately 6% of our respondents work in engineering, 6% in construction industry and 7% in medicine and 7% in tourism and catering.

This is naturally only a snapshot picture of the type of people who have left Greece, their profile and destination as well as their plans for the future. This study is ongoing and when we will elaborate the data we will also compare them with LFS and census data which indicate the number of people who have left Greece especially for some other EU or OECD country. Interestingly, our sample suggests that few people have sought work overseas in the USA or Australia, contrary to what was at times written in the media. It needs however not be forgotten that our sample is not representative, rather it offers insights on the direction and motivations of the emigration flows from Greece and the dynamics that govern it.

11. Concluding Remarks

A lack of perspective and a reluctance to accept that Greece is an immigration country remain the main two features of the Greek migration management model. After 20 years of experience as a host Greece is still to design and implement viable legal migration channels for third country nationals. While some steps have been taken to improve the plight of migrants and their families who have lost their legal status because of the current economic crisis and rampant unemployment, their fate remains insecure as long as stay permits are of a

short duration and Greek citizenship remains out of reach for not only the first but also the second and 1.5 generation.

The recent citizenship law that was expected to radically change the prospects of the second generation and to a large extent the prospects also of their parents has been annulled and the second generation is now given one year renewable permits, put, in other words, into the same track of any labour migrant. Unemployment has hit hard migrants from third countries in particular, both men and women. Many Albanian migrants are heading back to Albania looking for a better future there. Migrant integration in the Greek labour market and overall public attitudes towards migration are currently heavily influenced by the acute economic and political crisis that Greece is going through. The spectacular rise of the far right is particularly worrying and even though their racist discourse and violent attacks mainly target Asian and African migrants, they certainly do not make long term migrants from Southeastern and Eastern Europe feel comfortable or welcome either.

Migrants are seen now more than ever as competitors for scarce resources and even scarcer jobs. Actually the rise of racist violence and the increasing ethnic prejudice and overt racism expressed in public and political discourse is particularly worrying and needs to be addressed with concrete policy measures separately from any concerns about the criminal activities of the far right wing party Golden Dawn. Unfortunately racism and xenophobia are now more than before dominant features in Greek public life.

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