

Migration in Greece

Recent Developments in 2014

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Report prepared for the OECD Network of International Migration Experts,
Paris, 6-8 October 2014.



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Executive Summary

Overall Context

Greece is this year approaching the end of its “financial surveillance” programme (in December 2014). Yet structural changes in the country’s economy and public sector are progressing slowly as they face harsh opposition by trade unions. At the same time the population suffers from significant impoverishment due not only to dramatically rising unemployment and falling GDP but also significantly rising taxation.

This rather vulnerable, if not explosive, political and financial situation of Greece is matched with an increasingly unstable geopolitical environment in the region; internal conflict in Syria continues (displaced populations in neighbouring Turkey and Lebanon are now exceeding 1 million in each country), Iraq is imploding and the newly founded Islamic State is a great source of concern and instability for Europe and the entire world. In this difficult landscape, Greece has been faced with a significant increase in arrivals of irregular migrants and asylum seekers from Syria and the wider region (as well as African and Asian countries) in 2014 (approx.. 23,000 apprehensions at the Greek Turkish borders during the first six months of 2014 compared with approx.. 3,000 apprehensions during the entire 2013).

Irregular Migration

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. The main bulk of the irregular migration and asylum seeking flows towards Europe, during the period 2009-2012, were arriving through the Greek-Turkish land border in the northeastern corner of Greece, across the Evros river.

However, **irregular migration and asylum seeking routes have been shifting in the last two years (2013-2014):** the main outflows from Syria have been passing through Libya to Italy (Lampedusa and Sicily), and **to a lesser extent again through the Aegean islands (where arrivals have increased tenfold in the first six months of 2014 compared with 2013).** **The Greek Turkish land border has been largely abandoned** by irregular migrants and their smugglers, while there are reports that since 2013 asylum seeker and irregular migration flows are directed to Bulgaria and further to FYROM and Serbia towards central-western Europe.

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. Following a new asylum law in 2011, Greece has overhauled its asylum processing but a backlog of 45,000 cases remained to be processed with the 'old' system. The number has been reduced dramatically during 2013-2014 and the aim of the Greek government is to process all backlogged cases by December 2014.

Migrants in Transit

The combination of systematic detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, the systematic checks on the streets and other public places and the economic crisis have jointly led to many irregular migrants abandoning Greece (participating in voluntary/forced return programmes, or moving further north and west via Italy with the help of smuggling networks, or crossing north through the Balkan, cheaper routes of irregular migration and asylum seeking).

Rise and Fall (?) of the Far Right and the new "Anti-Racism" Bill

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 year (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.

A new "anti-racism" bill aiming to tackle racist behaviour and racist discourse has been introduced in Parliament in November 2013 but was eventually approved by Parliament in summer 2014 (law 4285/10.9.2014). Overall the law indirectly mirrors the Golden Dawn activities by condemning them. It toughens criminal sanctions for incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence. The law has been criticised by NGOs for falling short of protecting victims of racist violence who report a case. The law criminalises denial of the Holocaust and other genocides, and the use of neo Nazi symbols. Higher sanctions are foreseen for public officers who engage into racist or discriminatory behaviour or commit related actions. The law modifies previous legislation (dating from 1979) and is in line with the Framework Decisions 913 of 2008 by the Council of the EU with regard to the more effective combatting of racism and xenophobia and related crimes.

Management of Economic Migration: The Migration Code

A new Migration Code (Law 4251/2014) has been voted in April 2014. The new code like the previous migration laws, regulates matters of entry, stay and social integration of third country

nationals in Greece, integrating previous laws and bringing the Greek legislation fully up to date with EU law. 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. It also transposes and incorporates into a single text all European directives concerning the migration of students, trainees, researchers, highly skilled worker (Blue Card), and so on. It streamlines to some extent the processing of long term resident permits although these probably remain more cumbersome to access by comparison to the national 10-year long permit which is given to third country nationals who have been living legally in Greece for the previous 10 years (permits before the 10 year one are given on a 2-year basis).

The Migration Code offers a possibility for a case by case **regularization** for people who have lived in Greece for 10 years or who have had previously a legal stay permit (now expired) and/or who can prove that they have long lasting links with the country. It also offers the possibility to **regain legal status** for migrants who have been unable to renew their permits during the past 4 years (2010-2013) because of unemployment. Overall the Code offers an opportunity to regain legal residences status for all people who have had trouble renewing their papers during the last 4 years.

It offers a certain **stability perspective to the second generation**: people who were born in Greece, or have completed 6 years of schooling in Greece before they reached 21 years of age and who are legally residing in the country, can obtain a stay permit of 5 year duration. Such a stay permit is renewed every 5 years with the mere presentation of the previous stay permit. Nonetheless there is no preferential treatment for the second generation as regards citizenship acquisition. Parents of children who are Greek citizens can apply for a 5 year duration permit, renewable as long as their family relationship with the Greek citizen is maintained.

The Code unfortunately keeps the previous system of labour migration management with the cumbersome invitation process (metaklisi) and the biannual planning of labour market needs, which has been proven not to work for the past 20 years in Greece.

Overall, 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.

1. Introduction

Greece has been into a deep economic recession for five 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.

In this difficult landscape, Greece has been facing two important migration crises. On one hand a crisis of irregular migration and asylum seeking as Greece remains 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 particularly 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.

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 and particularly new developments in this field with the introduction of the Migration Code (April 2014). We also discuss the worrying rise of racist violence against migrants in Greek society and the newly introduced (September 2014) Anti-Racism law. The report concludes outlining the prospects of migration in Greek society in the mid-2010s.

2. The Migrant Population in Greece

According to the 2011 national census¹ 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

¹ While the national census of 2011 does not provide the most up to date data for 2014, it is worth consulting as regards the total migrant population residing in Greece as it does not distinguish between legal and undocumented

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 according to National Census Data, 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: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), 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

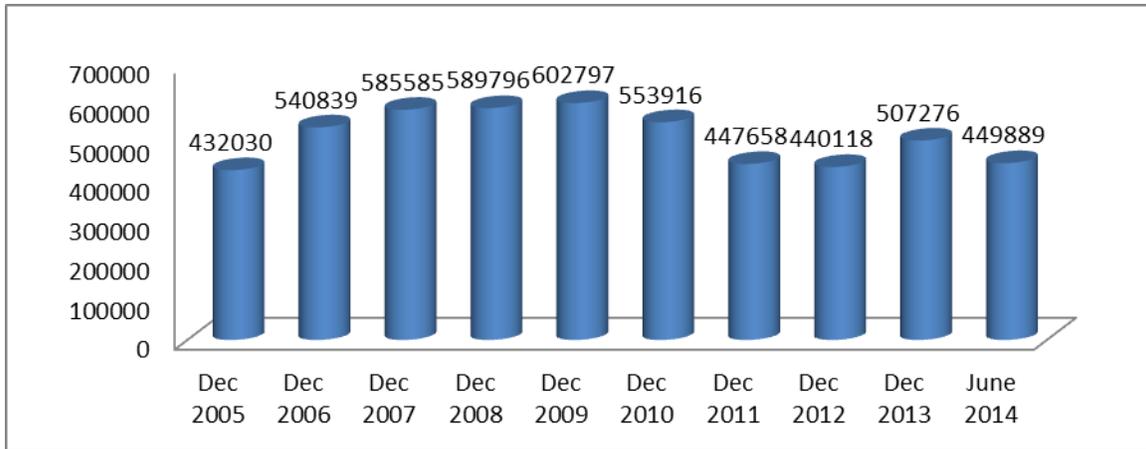
Data on effective inflows and outflows of immigrants in Greece are based on the issuing and renewal (or not) of stay permits but are not accurate as hardly any immigrants enter Greece through the legal channel (a more detailed discussion of this issue is given in Section 7 below on Greek immigration 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 2014, 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. Permits have slightly increased in 2013-2014 registering nearly 450,000 valid permits in June 2014.

residents. Even though one might consider that recent arrivals were not registered as at all probability they lacked a fixed domicile.

The decrease in the number of valid stay permits is related to the current economic crisis that Greece is facing: migrants lose their jobs and are unable to renew their permits. Consequently they either leave the country or stay but become undocumented. It is unclear (as the phenomenon is not registered either in Greece or in the countries of origin) as to how many Albanians for instance or Georgians for that matter stay on or leave because of “befallen irregularity” (i.e. loss of status because of unemployment).

Figure 1: Legal migrants (stock) Greece, 2005-2014



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

4. Irregular Migration Flows and Readmissions

Greece has been characterised by relatively high irregular migrant population stocks and flows during the past 25 years. The evolution of presumed inflows of irregular migrants (as registered through apprehensions at border areas) has gone through ups and downs at the different border areas (see table 2). The most notable reduction is at the Greek Albanian border as of 2011 and particularly this year, though this is closely related to the exemption from a visa requirement of Albanian nationals who are entering the EU for periods shorter than 90 days as of December 2010.

As regards the “hot” Greek/EU external border, notably the border with Turkey, the trends show that the Greek Turkish land and sea borders seem to follow the hydraulic principle: when inflows at the land border rise, they fall at the sea borders, and conversely when the land border crossings are abandoned (towards the end of 2010 and as of 2011) the island entries rise. Surely these trends are strongly influenced by geopolitical developments in the region since the Arab spring in 2011 and particularly the implosion of the Libyan regime, the conflict in Syria as well as the overall instability and conflict in the Middle East which have reshuffled the irregular migration and asylum seeking routes in the whole southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Thus while in 2012-2013, Italy carried the brunt of these developments (since the lack of law and order in

Libya was facilitating the operations of the smuggling networks ferrying migrants through Libya to Italy and Malta), during the first part of 2014, numbers of arrivals at the Greek Turkish borders in the Aegean sea and its islands have increased tenfold (from just over 2,500 in 2013, to approx.. 22,000 in the first 8 months of 2014!)

Table 2: Apprehensions of irregular migrants, per border, 2007-2014

Apprehensions	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Greek Albanian border	42,897	39,267	38,164	33,979	11,743	10,927	10,413	4,957
Greek FYROM border	2,887	3,459	2,355	1,589	1,003	1,168	1,041	810
Greek Bulgarian border	966	1,795	1,258	983	636	365	505	442
Greek Turkish land border	16,789	14,461	8,787	47,088	54,974	30,433	1,122	1,141
Greek Turkish sea border	16,781	30,149	27,685	6,204	814	3,610	2,525	21,983
Crete	2,245	2,961	2,859	2,444	1,640	2,834	2,557	1,869
Rest of the country	29,799	54,245	45,037	40,237	29,372	31,151	16,253	10,728
TOTAL	112,364	146,337	126,145	132,524	99,368	76,878	34,416	41,930

Note: data refer to apprehensions, not to people. Hence the same person if apprehended twice counts twice. * data refer to the first 8 months of 2014.

Source: Greek police data, www.astynomia.gr

A closer look at the nationalities of the migrants apprehended in Greece because undocumented, we notice the emergence of Syrians as the largest group in 2014, for the first time entering the top-5 in 2012, rising to 2nd place in 2013 and now being the largest group. Afghans remain an important group even if with much fewer apprehensions compared to the period 2009-2012. Indeed one might argue that Afghans have stopped coming and those who had come have probably moved on to some other European country. Interestingly Pakistanis have also declined in absolute numbers from nearly 20,000 in 2011 to approx. 2,000 in 2014, even if they remain within the top 5 nationality groups as regards apprehensions. The dynamics of irregular migration and asylum seeking towards Greece or via Greece to other countries are discussed in more detail further below.

Table 3: Apprehensions of irregular migrants in Greece (at the borders and within the country, 5 main nationality groups) 2009-2014

2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014*	
Albania	63,563	Albania	50,175	Afghanistan	28,528	Afghanistan	16,584	Albania	15,389	Syria	17,365
Afghanistan	17,828	Afghanistan	28,299	Pakistan	19,975	Pakistan	11,136	Syria	8,517	Albania	9,485
Palestine	10,763	Pakistan	8,830	Albania	11,733	Albania	10,602	Afghanistan	6,412	Afghanistan	6,184
Somalia	7,710	Palestine	7,561	Bangladesh	5,416	Syria	7,927	Pakistan	3,982	Pakistan	2,222
Iraq	7,662	Algeria	7,336	Algeria	5,398	Bangladesh	7,863	Bangladesh	1,524	Somalia	1,239

Source: Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen, www.astynomia.gr for all years cited here. * first 8 months of 2014.

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 4 below presents the national composition of the migrant population in Greece in 2014, 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.

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.

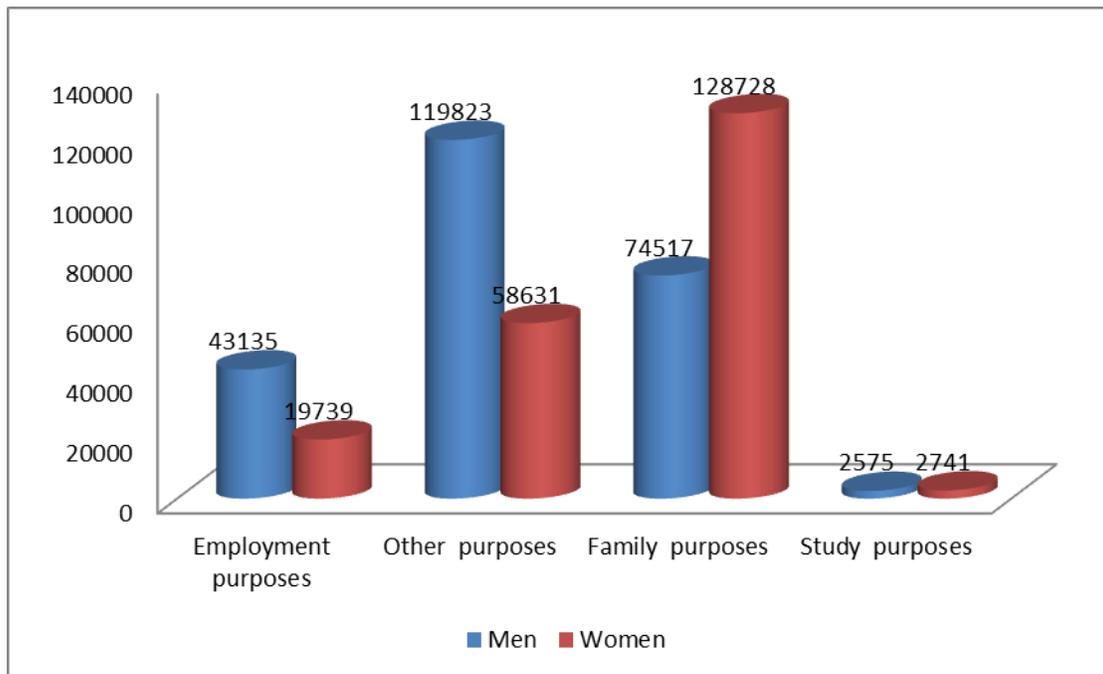
Table 4: National Composition of the Migrant Population

	Population		TCN valid permits	
	Census 2011		December 2011	June 2014
Country of Origin	Number	Percentage		
Albania	480,851	52.72	388,666	302,148
Bulgaria	75,917	8.32		
Romania	46,524	5.10		
Pakistan	34,178	3.75	16,974	15,129
Georgia	27,407	3.01	16,577	15,549
Ukraine	17,008	1.86	20,264	17,203
UK	15,388	1.69		
Cyprus	14,448	1.58		
Poland	14,145	1.55		
Russia	13,809	1.51	13,454	12,605
India	11,333	1.24	13,639	11,995
Bangladesh	11,076	1.21	6,100	5,598
Germany	10,782	1.18		
Egypt	10,455	1.15	13,629	10,747
Moldova	10,391	1.14	11,480	8,488
Philippines	9,807	1.08	9,633	8,612
Armenia	8,113	0.89	5,910	5,536
Syria	7,628	0.84	7,394	5,739
Afghanistan	6,911	0.76	216	147
USA	5,773	0.63	2,194	2,033
OTHER	80,056	8.78		28,360
TOTAL	912,000	100.00		449,889

Sources: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), National Census data 2011; Ministry of Interior, Valid Stay Permits on 31 December 2011 and on 30 June 2014.

Concerning the purpose of third country nationals' stay 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 reunification (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, 30 June 2014



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

Regarding the settled population, it is worth noting that in June 2014, there were nearly 150,000 people holding a 10-year or indefinite duration stay permit. Long-term permits have increased significantly in the last six years, but still account for about one third of the total legal migrant population in June 2014 (approx.. 450,000).

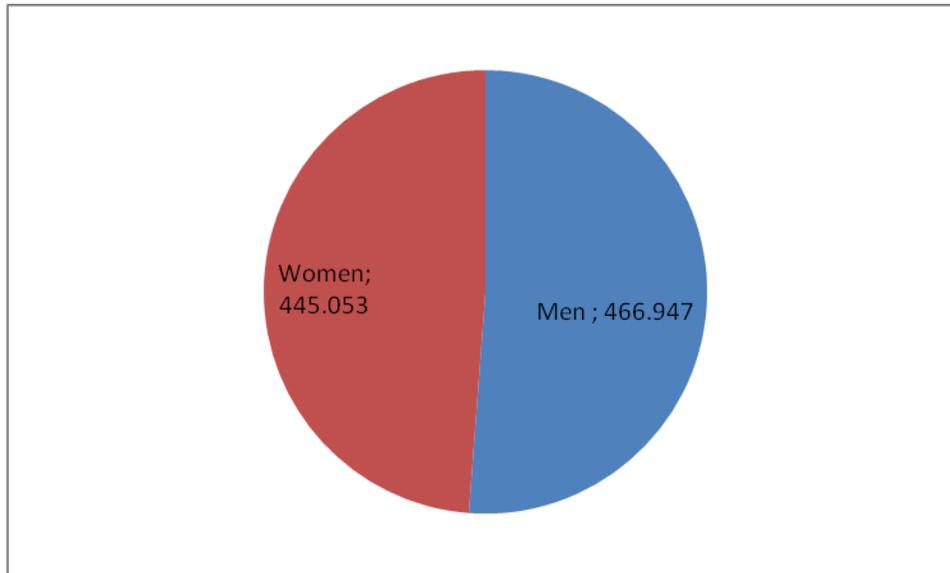
Table 5: Long-Term Permits Issued, 2007-2014

Type of permit	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total permits of 10-year or indefinite duration etc.	821	34,296	45,998	62,312	75,377	107,080		144,449

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

The 2011 census data confirm the imbalanced gender composition of the migrant population—men are 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, 2011

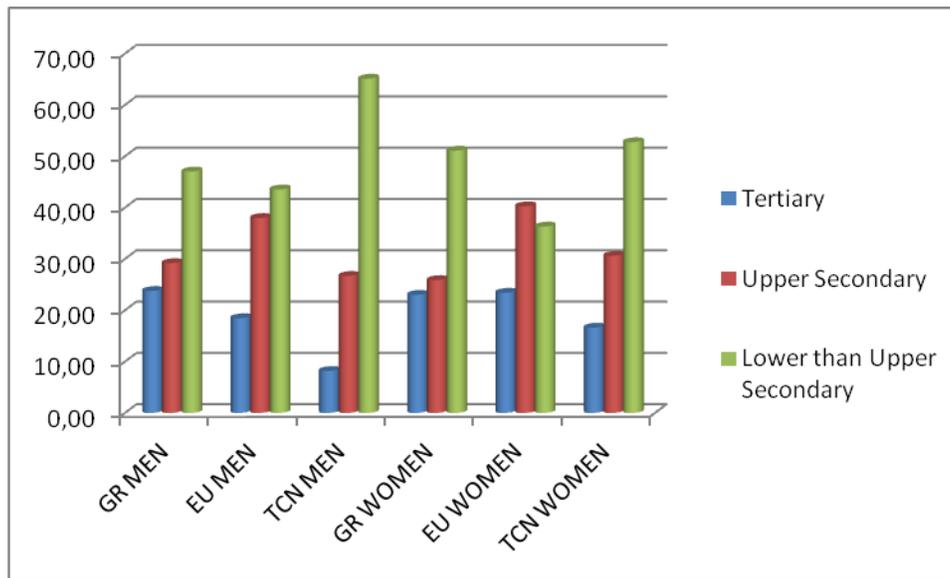


Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), Census, 2011

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, 2011 (%)



Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), Census, 2011

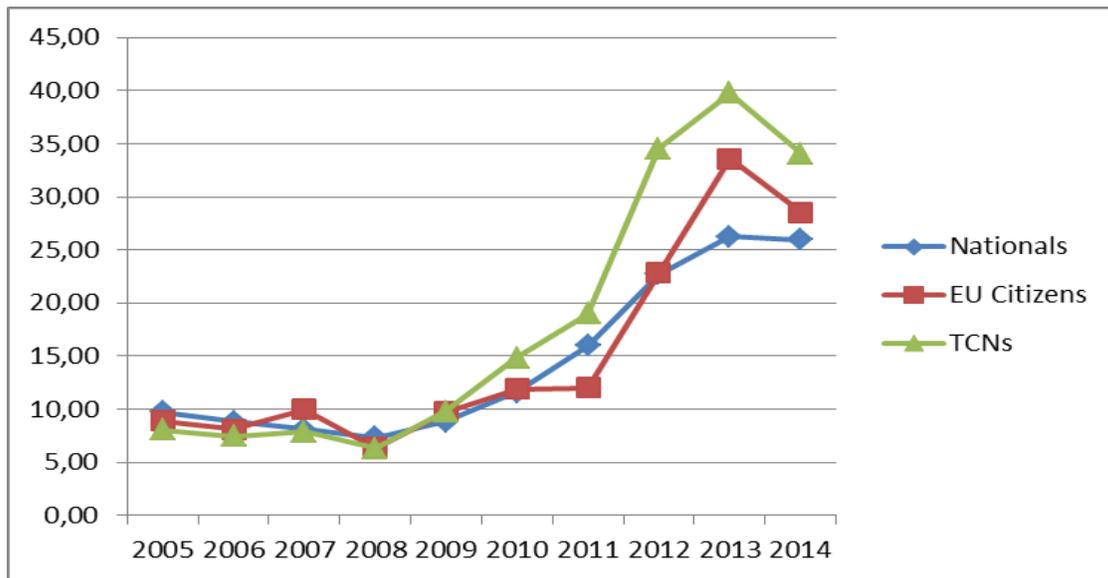
Note: people born after the 1st of January 2005 are not included in the count.

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 since 2011. As shown in Figure 6, Labour Force Survey data for the period 2005-2014 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. Quite surprisingly unemployment for both TCNs and EU citizens (non Greeks) has improved significantly in the last 18 months going down to, a still too high of course, 34% and 28% respectively (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Unemployment rates by nationality in percentages 2005-2014

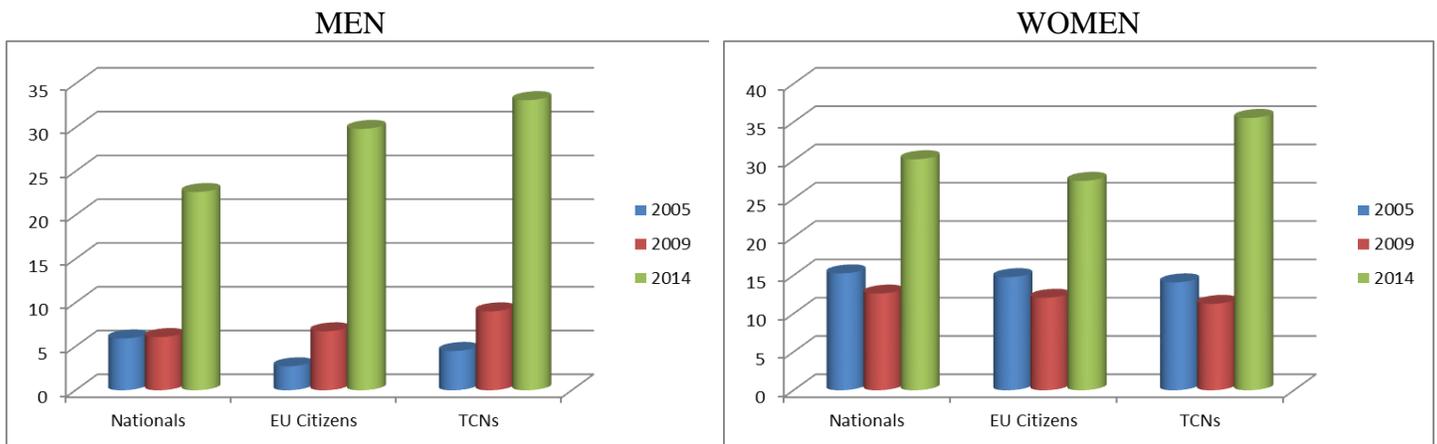


Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), Labour Force Survey, 2nd trimester of each year

Looking at the gender variation of unemployment levels, we notice that male TCNs have resisted the crisis and registered only 14% unemployment in 2010 (up 2 percentage points from 2009) but the situation exploded since then. Their current unemployment has nearly quadrupled compared with 2009.

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 2012, slightly reduced to 26% and 34% in mid-2014. 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 2005-2009. 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.

Figure 7: Unemployment rates by nationality group and gender in percentages (2005-2014)



Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), LFS, 2nd Trimester of each year

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 have cut off on cleaning and caring services usually provided by foreign women.

In short, 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 five 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. Nonetheless Greece remains home to approximately 0.9 million immigrants of whom 0.2 come from EU countries (mainly Bulgaria and Romania) while the remaining 0.7 come from non EU countries most notably neighbouring Albania. Approximately 150,000 people hold indefinite duration or ten year stay permits, testifying to the fact that migrants and their families have taken roots in the country.

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 new Migration Code voted in April 2014.

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 police persons that had not received any asylum training, and 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.²

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. It also submitted before the Council a National Action Plan on Immigration and Asylum that would form the basis for the reforms that followed. Law 3907/2011 passed by the Greek Parliament in January 2011 introduced the Asylum Service, an Appeals Committee and a First Reception Service. The Asylum Service and the Appeals committee would be autonomous and impartial, while the First Reception Service would be responsible for the ‘management’ of new arrivals, bringing together a team of ‘first respondents’ in the maritime and land borders. The law harmonised Greece with the European Directives on Reception and Return, and created a functioning asylum service. 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 old system had resulted in 45,000 unprocessed applications by the summer of 2013. To enable the new Asylum Service to function, the backlogged cases remained the responsibility of the police, who was processing claims under the previous system, with the provision that if a claim is rejected on appeals but new evidence arise, it can be resubmitted under the new system for examination. This served a dual purpose. On the one hand the new service would begin its

² 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).

performance unencumbered by the backlog and it would also offer an additional safeguard to those processed under the ‘old system’ in case of rejection of their case.

In fact recognition rates on both the old and the new asylum system have greatly improved, from nearly null or 1% to the percentages given below i.e to an approval rate of between 15 and 25% in total (refugee status and subsidiary protection).

Table 6 Asylum seeking recognition rates, First instance, 2nd semester 2013

First Instance - Recognition Rates (In substance examination) June 2013-December 2013		
Refugee Status	229	11,0%
Subsidiary Protection	92	4,4%
Negative	1757	84,6%
Total	2078	100,0%

Note: Data provided upon request by the Asylum Service (August 2014)

Table 7 Asylum seeking recognition rates, First instance, Jan-Aug 2014

First Instance - Recognition Rates(In substance examination) January-June 2014		
Refugee Status	531	17,4%
Subsidiary Protection	232	7,6%
Negative	2294	75,0%
Total	3057	100,0

Note: Data provided upon request by the Asylum Service (August 2014)

Table 8 Asylum seeking approval rates, First Instance 2011-2013 (i.e. under the ‘old’ system)

FIRST INSTANCE (2011-2013)			
	2011	2012	2013†
SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS	9311	9577	3407
*EXAMINED APPLICATIONS	8685	11193	10738
REJECTIONS	n/a	11097	10558
REFUGEE STATUS	44	32	28
RATE OF REFUGEE STATUS RECOGNITION	0,51%	29%	0,26%
SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION	87	45	83
RATE OF SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION RECOGNITION	1,00%	0,40%	0,77%

HUMANITARIAN STATUS	47	19	69
RATE OF HUMANITARIAN STATUS RECOGNITION	0,54%	0,17%	0,64%
TERMINATIONS-WITHDRAWALS	n/a	4689	3792
PENDING***	n/a	7009	
OTHER OTHERWISED CLOSED CASES *****	n/a	n/a	8.621
† applications until 6/6/2013			
* Refers To Submitted Applications Of Previous Years			
** Refers To Appeals Submitted In Previous Years			
*** Refers To Applications Of Previous Years			
****Clearance Of Inactive Cases, Withdrawals Implicit Of L.4058/12			

Note: Data provided by the Hellenic Police, upon request (August 2014)

The new asylum agency (the first asylum office started operating with a 2.5 year delay, on June 2013) is autonomous and decentralised (with several regional offices). First Reception Centres are being constructed in selected places and where there is a notable inflow of immigrants mobile units are deployed (the first of these centres started operating in March 2013 in the northeastern land border of Greece, near the Evros river). 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 offices³ as well as the asylum units (operating within pre-departure detention facilities and screening centres) are 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 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

³ There are 3 Regional Asylum Offices (RAO), in Attiki, Alexandroupoli, Lesbos. Two more will be operational by end of 2014, in Rhodes and in Thessaloniki.

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 since 2007 in particular.

In the fall of 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).

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 islands⁴, particularly in Lesbos. It has also been criticized for detaining asylum seekers⁵, 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).

On 24 February 2014, the Greek Legal Council published Advisory Opinion no 44/2014, in which it held that it was legal for the Greek authorities to detain irregular migrants beyond eighteen (18) months – the maximum time allowed under Greek law – and prolong their detention indefinitely, until the latter consent to return to their home countries. The Opinion had been initiated by a police query concerning the fate of 300 migrants out of a total number of 7,500 detainees, who were about to be released as their removal had not been carried out in time. According to the Council such a measure was justified by the need to prevent “*a rapid increase in the number of irregular migrants in the country and its undesirable consequences in public order and safety*” that the timely release of the 300 migrants as well as any future ones would “*with certainty*” cause. This would also serve the best interests of irregular migrants, “*who are vulnerable people*” and destitute, but can enjoy a dignified living inside the detention centre.⁶ Even though Advisory Opinions are not binding, the police authorities accepted it unconditionally and are already issuing decisions that inform detainees about this newest

⁴ For the situation at Greek detention centers see ProAsyl (2007), Human Rights Watch (2008), Frontex (September 2011).

⁵ 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.

⁶ Greek Council of State, Advisory Opinion No 44/2014, published on 24 February 2014, pp. 22-23.

development. At the same time, Greece has undertaken a significant financial investment in detention centres⁷ (for more see Angeli and Triandafyllidou 2014).

The idea behind this latest course of action by the Greek authorities is rather straightforward: faced with the prospect of indefinite stay inside a Greek detention centre – often under unacceptable conditions – irregular migrants will opt to return to their homelands. Once there, they will warn others and discourage new arrivals. The size of the migrant population will gradually shrink and Greece will have largely addressed irregular arrivals. Yet the systematic use of any detention, let alone an indefinite one, cannot live long as a policy tool to manage the irregular migrant population in Greece, because it is – to put it rather simply – in violation of existing obligations.

It is also 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 (Dimitriadi 2013; Yousef 2013). 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 2014 (www.astynomia.gr), show for instance that among expelled migrants Albanians are still the top nationality group with 4,599 people; Pakistanis come second with 1,896, while the third largest group are Georgians with 472 returns, Bangladesh with 467, Egypt with nearly 400. Interestingly 258 Afghans and 168 Iraqis and 154 Syrians were also returned to their countries during the first seven months of 2014.

These data suggest that returns to distant countries are much more difficult to execute and require a high amount of financial and human resources as well as good cooperation with the country of origin. The case of Pakistan is worth a closer look as it is the Asian country with the highest number of both voluntary returns and executed expulsions in Greece.

The last two years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of executed expulsions of Pakistani immigrants where numbers have increased from 245 in 2009 to 1,293 in 2011 and over 5,000 in 2012 (5,135) (source, Hellenic Police, cit in Yousef 2013: 21). Return flights ran twice a month instead of once a semester in 2012. Voluntary returns to Pakistan included both voluntary returns coordinated by the police and those coordinated by the IOM (with a 300 euro financial aid upon return). These include cases where the migrant spontaneously turn to the IOM or the police because they want to return to Pakistan or where they chose to return “voluntarily” after having been apprehended (they are informed while in detention). An additional bonus in this case is that they avoid being registered in the list of “undesired persons” of the police, hence they are not banned for a future entry visa. Indeed voluntary returns via the Greek police have risen from 294 in 2011 to 1,870 in 2012, and those via IOM return programmes, from 421 in 2011 to nearly

⁷ For the 2014 calls search under “Expenses” approved by the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen at <http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr>.

5,000 in 2012 (4,575) (Hellenic Police and IOM Athens, data provided in spring 2013, cited in Yousef 2013: 22).

Yousef (2013) also argues that the rise of Pakistani returns from Greece has more to do with the financial crisis and the impossibility to find employment, even in the informal labour market, than with mere control measures. Return is, greatly facilitated by the EU Readmission Agreement with Pakistan signed in 2010⁸. The agreement allows for the repatriation of irregular migrants who have travelled to the EU from Pakistan and covers also Afghan migrants who transit through Pakistan. Overall, last three years have seen vast improvement on returns broadly, including voluntary through the Hellenic Police program, forced (deportations) and voluntary via IOM. The latter is heavily promoted as a viable and dignified alternative to irregular stay. The 18 months of detention at pre-removal detention facilities and frequent police checks at public places contribute to this success.

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

As of April 2014, Greece has a new immigration law that brings some improvement to the previous situation although it does not reform the main bastions of Greek immigration policy which for 25 years treats immigration as a lesser evil that has to be cushioned but that is not managed in any proactive way.

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”

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http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/j10057_en.htm

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) (article 9).

Second, the migration code offers a certain security of residence to the second generation (article 108). People who were born in Greece or who have finished 6 years of schooling in Greece by age 21, can obtain a stay permit of 5 year duration. Such a stay permit is renewed every 5 years with the mere presentation of the previous stay permit. Nonetheless there is no preferential treatment for the second generation as regards citizenship acquisition. Parents of children who are Greek citizens can apply for a 5 year duration permit, renewable as long as their family relationship with the Greek citizen is maintained.

Third, Article 19 codifies stay permits for humanitarian and exceptional 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. Overall the Migration Code takes steps to bring back to legal status people who have been in Greece for the last 10 years undocumented and people who have lost their legal status because of unemployment.

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 26), 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 gives a sense of perspective to the second generation and to the parents or siblings of Greek citizens albeit naturalization remains a different “chapter” altogether.

Another problematic issue is the prohibition to state employees including doctors in hospitals for instance, to provide their services to irregular migrants as well as the criminalization of those who rent accommodation to irregular migrants (article 29) 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) 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).

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).

The invitation procedure was extremely complex and time-consuming as it included a whole series of 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 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 Maroufof 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. Naturalisation Policy

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.

While there has been a brief interlude between 2010 and 2012 where a much more generous naturalization law⁹ has been adopted (law 3838/2010), this law was annulled by the Council of

⁹ Facilitating the citizenship acquisition for children born in Greece or who had completed six years of schooling in the country, reducing the residence requirement for the first generation to 7 years, upgrading the importance of the EU long term residence status as a stepping stone to citizenship, and last but not least introducing local political rights for third country nationals residing in Greece for 5 years or longer and holding a long duration stay permit.

State in early 2013. As a result however of both the opening towards co ethnics from Albania and the temporary implementation of the new law, naturalisations have sharply increased in the post-2007 period from 2- to 5-digit numbers (see table below).

Table 9 Acquisition of Greek Citizenship (2000-2013)

Year	Naturalisations
2000	66
2001	58
2002	52
2003	36
2004	23
2005	66
2006	68
2007	10,806
2008	16,922
2009	17,019
2010	-
2011	19,222
2012	21,737
2013	24,894

Source: Ministry of Interior¹⁰

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. In the meantime the Migration Code has filled the “gap” by providing security of residence to the second generation and to their family members but without effectively providing a clear path to citizenship for either.

9. Public opinion on migration and the Rise of Racist Violence

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 where they overall consider migration as a bad thing for Greek society, economy and national identity, even if they largely agree that migrants do the jobs that Greeks do not want to do. Opinions grow significantly more negative through the years (more positive in 2006, to more negative in 2010) (Xenios Dias 2006; Public Issue, 2010)

In the period after 2009, which has been characterised by the economic crisis, both the political

¹⁰ Data for 2011 to 2013 are available through the Ministry’s website: http://www.ypes.gr/UserFiles/f0ff9297-f516-40ff-a70e-eca84e2ec9b9/StatsCategory_2011_2013_04032014.pdf

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.

Racist and xenophobic incidents including episodes of racist violence have sharply increased in Greece in the past few years. Third country nationals, including asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants are increasingly attacked, by mainly members of right-wing groups. For Muslim immigrants of Pakistani or indeed Afghan origin, the lack of historical and cultural ties with the Greek society makes things worse in terms of ethnic and religious stigmatisation.

The Pakistani community is targeted by racist attacks, which have taken alarming dimensions since the beginning of 2011, according to statements by representatives of Pakistani associations in Greece. The Pakistani Community has denounced 60 incidents of racist violence in the first quarter of 2011 (Interview No. 2, HRW, 2012, cited in Yousef 2013). It should be noted that not only members of migrant and refugee communities have become a target but also informal mosques, shops and community lounges belonging to members of immigrant communities (Amnesty International, 2012: 23).

During 2011-2012, violence has escalated. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a series of criminal attacks has been directed against foreigners based on criteria such as the colour of skin, the geo cultural and geopolitical origin and religion (AFP, September 26, 2011). More specifically, the image presented in the press is as follows:

A plethora of attacks that evolve after sunset or in the early morning hours and are organized actions by groups of Greeks, members of extremist groups, including the Golden Dawn, usually 20-30 years old motorcyclists or pedestrians dressed in black, holding knives and bats in main squares or public transportation stops, to immigrants who usually wait to move to their workplace. During the last year the attacks continued into buses and in subway stations frightening other passengers too (Aformi, September 16, 2011).

Another picture of attacks in the media are those that are organized by members / supporters of the Golden Dawn, in private places, mainly in shops or in migrants' houses in various parts of Athens, where apart from being beaten, migrants are also victims of looting and theft (UNHCR, Against Racism 2012, ANTIGONE, 2012).

It is worth noting that lately attacks on workers of Pakistani origin who protested against the Greek employers for compensation or arrears accrued, have increased (Youssef 2013). The economic recession of the last three years has affected particularly the development of the rural sector, where mostly immigrants are employed, leading to a radically increased racist violence and economic and social exploitation. Payments are scarce and when employees react by requesting their salaries, they end up at the hospital or in the best scenario they get replaced by

other compatriots. Among many other similar situations, the case of Nea Manolada in the Peloponnese is the most striking; it saw the light of publicity recently and confirms the incidents of racist violence and labour exploitation, where about 5,500 workers-out of which a large number of Pakistani immigrants- work in farms of the area (Ethnos, 20 April 2013).

The incidents that relate the police with the racist violence are a special category. These are incidents in which police officers during the performance of their duties, resort to unlawful acts and practices of violence. Cases of mistreatment in police stations and detention centers, and the destruction of legal documents were recorded (UNHCR, Annual Report 2012). According to the Racist Violence Recording Network of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (2012), complaints were lodged by victims, representatives of the Pakistani community and Greek NGOs where police failed to take steps to protect citizens of third countries from attacks of racial motives. In such cases, for example, police officers either arrived very late to the scene of the attack, or were present in assaults by extremist groups, mainly supporters of the Golden Dawn against Pakistanis, but took no measures to protect the victims; or they did not arrest the perpetrators (Against Racism, 20 July 2012). In some cases it was reported that policemen brought the injured victim to the police station to check the legality of residence documents, instead of carrying it to the hospital or even discouraged the victim from filing a claim, or failed to make a formal complaint as a racially motivated attack (Amnesty International, 2012: 23).

In a general climate of fear, 90% of victims of racist attacks seeking help for their injuries, choose not to report the case to the authorities, because of lack of legal documents and of fear that they will be arrested, then detained and possibly deported (UNHCR Greece, Against Racism 2012, ANTIGONE, Annual Report 2012). The general climate of impunity for the perpetrators of the racist attacks discourages also the victims from filing a case. The culprits of violent attacks against foreigners remain overwhelmingly unpunished, and when they get arrested, in most cases they are set free again (UNHCR, 2012:23-24).

In response to the above, the government brought to Parliament the so called “Anti-Racist” Bill in November 2013 with a view of hardening sanctions against racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic discourse and actions. The bill was eventually voted in Parliament on 10 September 2014 (law 4285/2014). While indeed the law toughens criminal sanctions for incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence, it makes no reference to racial motivation and does not do enough to protect the victims of racial violence. The law places special emphasis on criminalising the denial of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity as these are recognised by international courts or the Greek Parliament. Overall the law is a very good initiative on paper but it remains to be seen what measures will be taken to counteract the rise of racist violence and racist or xenophobic behaviour not only among right wing extremist groupings but among the general population.

10. Emigration of Greeks abroad

There has been a lot of discussion as to whether Greeks are emigrating abroad to seek employment. Unemployment rates have been dramatically high in the last 5 years reaching a peak in the summer of 2013 (with over 28% of general unemployment and over 55% of youth

unemployment) but have since slightly eased to 26% overall unemployment and 51% among youth. 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.

An indication of not the total number of emigrants from Greece to important destination countries (as documented also in Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014) but of the trends can be given through an analysis of the residents born in Greece that appear in national statistics of these countries. Thus, we note a non negligible increase in the major European destinations, notably, Germany, Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland, but no increase (actually a small decrease) in the people born in Greece resident in Australia.

Table 10: People born in Greece, residing abroad (selected countries), 2010-2013

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013
Germany	276,685	283,684	298,254	316,331
UK	29,000	32,000	34,000	41,000
Sweden	4,824	5,290	6,222	7,126
NL	7,781	8,584	10,100	11,760
Switzerland	6,808	7,521	8,678	9,788
Australia*	97,153	97,072	96,916	96,433

Sources:

Germany: <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/ForeignPopulation/Tables/CitizenshipTimeSerie.html>; UK: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>; Sweden: http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101F/UtlmedbR/?rxid=15e8fb18-2828-4818-8a52-835ffe473705; Netherlands: <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/dome/?LA=en>; Switzerland: <http://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/>; Australia: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3412.02011-12%20and%202012-13?OpenDocument#Data>

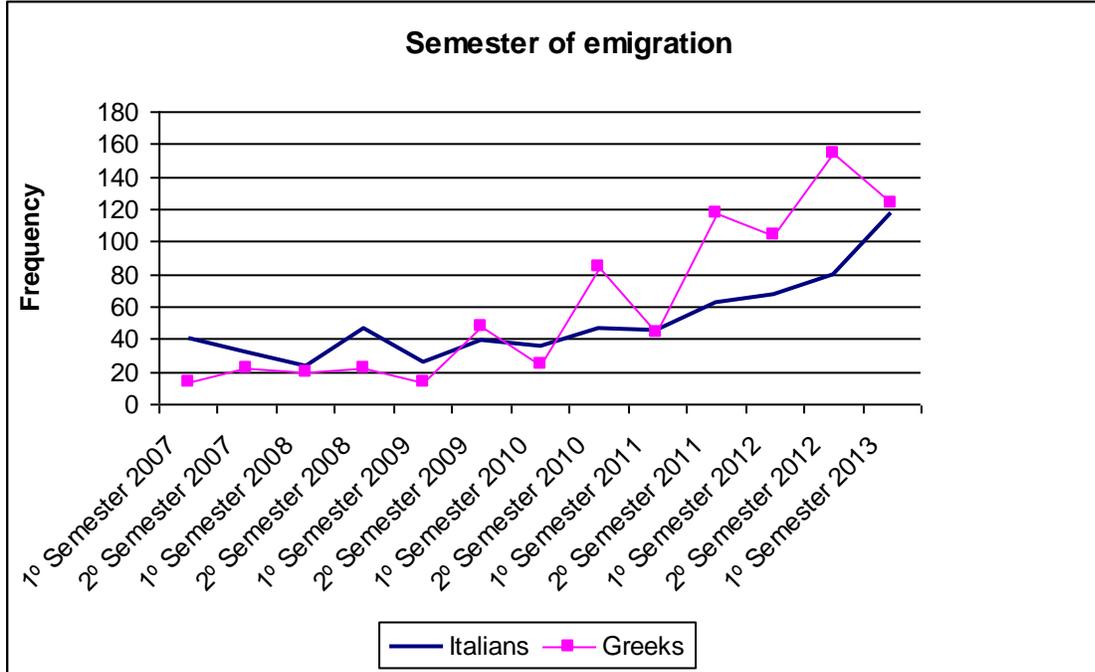
With regard to the dynamics and motivations of emigration from Greece, the findings of Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2014) based on a large online survey (with 919 respondents who are Greek citizens living abroad) that captured mainly the highly skilled Greeks who have left the country in the period between 2007 and the summer of 2013 suggests the following gender, education and skills profile:

Nearly two thirds (68%) of Greek respondents (self-selected through advertisements in large newspapers and online news web sites) were men and about half were in the 30-45 age range. The other half of the respondents are aged 30 or under.

The respondents of this survey are in their overwhelming majority highly educated: 89% hold a higher education degree. Business and economics majors, engineers, computer and IT specialists and social scientists formed the largest groups. Just over half of our respondents (53.7%) had completed post-graduate studies and 14.5% held PhDs.

We included in the analysis only people who have left Greece after the 1st January 2007 with a view to capturing the full impact of the crisis as it has unfolded in the last 5-6 years.

Figure 9: Emigration trends among Italian and Greek respondents 2007-2013



Interestingly if we compare the trend (from the same survey data, with 901 Italian respondents) in Greece and Italy, it becomes clear that while more than half of the Greek respondents left between January 2011 and June 2013, only one third of Italian respondents left during the same period. In addition, the survey sample of Italians is distributed relatively evenly through the years till it picks up in 2011. By contrast outflows from Greece among our respondents are particularly low till 2010 when they dramatically increase. This suggests that the crisis which was clearly more acutely felt in Greece, had a strong impact on the Greek outgoing high skill migration. Its increasing trend seems to follow the rising levels of unemployment: the general unemployment rate in Greece stood at just under 10% in 2010 and was over 25% in the summer of 2013.

It is worth highlighting here some of the findings of this study with regard to the motivation for leaving Greece and the reasons for choosing a specific destination country.

Reasons for choosing the specific destination country: The choice was guided by employment offers or study opportunities and an overall appreciation of the quality of life (including respect for the citizen, security and a good health and education system) in that particular country on the part of the migrant. Kinship and family networks only marginally affected the emigration plan and there was no connection with earlier southern European emigrations to northern or western Europe from the post war period. This finding is evident across all the responses leading to the conclusion that it is the migrant – and not the receiving country - that is the selecting agent. From a policy relevant perspective, the implications of this are that though governments may pursue stricter or more lenient immigration policies, it may be a completely different set of factors, unrelated to migration policies – such as quality of democracy, social justice, the quality

of higher education, or the openness and flexibility of the labour market – that function as strong ‘pull’ factors in the decision to immigrate for high skilled migrants

Motivations for leaving one’s own country: the things they appreciate most or they dislike at home and at destination and the ways in which our respondents make sense overall of their emigration experience, the study highlights complex patterns. Decisions were not guided by the mere fact of poverty or absolute necessity. Our respondents engage into several, complex and often contradictory discursive strategies to explain their decisions and actions. A strong notion of agency dominates their discourse; they construct their self-image as people who are rational, wilful, strong, organised and motivated. They emphasise a rational cost benefit calculation in line with our interpretative framework based on the micro-level neo-classical economic theory.

While these findings are based on an exploratory study of the dynamics of high skill emigration flows from Greece, it provides some important first insights as to the complex motivations behind the decision making of the respondents, and points to a sense of relative deprivation that they experience. The notion of relative deprivation is particularly well suited to discuss the emigration of young and highly skilled people from Greece and Italy at times of acute economic crisis. Their relative deprivation concerns not so much how other people in their society are doing but rather with regard to their own expectations and plans they had for the future, as well as with regards to the opportunities they perceive to be available in third countries. They feel most strongly the fact that their local or national socio-economic context has changed, for the worse, and they cannot come to terms with such downgrading. They thus put their human capital (more than their social one) into action and seek employment and better life opportunities elsewhere. The core problems and obstacles that they identify in their national context are not new – in fact they are characteristics that are perceived as deeply engrained in their home countries and responsible for the way in which the current crisis has developed. Thus, corruption, nepotism, lack of meritocracy in particular are flagged out as ‘push’ factors in their migration decision. Even more so, the fact that these conditions have been magnified in their home countries during the crisis rather than addressed seems to have triggered more determination to accept the costs associated with this migration project in their new host countries and an even stronger desire to demonstrate resilience and success.

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 25 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. The legal crackdown on Golden Dawn is important but does not seem to counter the root causes of rising xenophobia and racisms. The lack of migrant integration measures and of a clear path to citizenship for the long term settled in Greece remain conspicuous and eloquent features of the Greek migration policy that seeks to manage the phenomenon temporarily rather than provide a new vision for Greek society in a more interdependent and unpredictable world.

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