

# Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece

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## **Migrant integration policies in four municipalities in Greece**

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## Executive summary

Local government plays a key role in the integration of migrants in Europe. Municipalities have assumed an increasingly pro-active role in dealing with the reception of newcomers, as well as with the challenges facing the long-term integration of legally residing migrants. Local and municipal authorities, independently or in cooperation with other public agencies and non-governmental organizations, are providers of a large array of social services in the area of health, education and social and child care. They are also responsible for maintaining the social infrastructure of cities where many ethnic and migrant communities live. The 2011 EU Agenda for the Integration of TCNs has placed particularly strong emphasis on the active involvement and indispensable role of regional and local authorities in the formulation and implementation of migrant integration policies.

Despite its importance in confronting multi-ethnic diversity and the challenges of integration, the multifaceted role of local government in the area of migrant integration is neither well understood nor sufficiently researched. In fact, it has remained in the periphery of the otherwise voluminous and rapidly growing area of integration studies. We have limited knowledge about the variety of ways in which local authorities in Europe affect the prospects for a more inclusive multi-cultural society, as well as the conditions and factors that enable or constrain local authorities' action in this regard. The LOMIGRAS project, of which this report is a part, seeks to contribute towards filling this gap. It explores whether and the extent to which municipalities in Greece develop and implement policies that influence the integration of migrants in the country. It does so specifically in regard to longstanding migrants who began to settle in the country since the late 1980s and especially the 1990s.

In Greece, municipalities do not have *de jure* competencies in the area of migrants' integration. However, they strongly shape the local environment within which it takes place, promoting or conversely undermining the prospects of integration. Greek municipalities can do so a) through the way in which they implement general policies, and how actively they seek to reach and bring in TCNs so that they equally benefit from general policies that target the population at large (i.e. such as social policy, education and urban regeneration, among others), and b) through projects, programs and initiatives that are specifically designed for and target TCNs, and which often have to secure national or European funding outside of the municipal budget. Since 2010, municipal authorities in Greece have been at the forefront in dealing with the social dislocations stemming from the economic crisis. They have also directly been confronted with local reactions and pressures that in large urban centers like Athens find expression in the political extremism of the Golden Dawn and occasionally of other political parties.

This report explores the policies and measures adopted by four Greek municipalities – Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Patras – and their concern with, as well as appropriateness for migrant integration. These cities are Greece's four largest municipalities. Together with the greater urban areas surrounding them, they are also home to almost half of the legally residing migrant population in Greece. Our research has addressed the following questions: Do the municipalities under study pursue the integration of immigrants as a distinct policy objective, or indirectly by mainstreaming it in the different policies that they implement? What factors influence the extent to which migrant integration is pursued? What are some of the obstacles in promoting integration? What are the relations between municipalities, migrant

organizations and other NGOs active at the local level? To what extent do local authorities explicitly or implicitly incorporate immigrant integration priorities and objectives in the frame of implementing their policies in employment, education, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, and civic participation? In exploring these questions, we analyze local government policies and their relevance for migrant integration in three domains: legal-political, social-economic, and religious-cultural. Local government actions and policies in these three policy domains can vary across the different municipalities in a single country, and they can also change over time.

The first section of this report outlines our conception of integration and defines the immigrant groups who are the target of relevant policies. The second section gives a brief overview of immigration in Greece and in the four municipalities under study, and discusses how municipalities engage in policies that directly target and/or indirectly influence the potential of migrants to integrate in society. The third section analyzes the legal frame for local government powers and competencies, within which general municipal policies but also the actions specifically targeting migrants are decided and implemented. Section 5 focuses on the four municipalities under study: Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Patras. Section 6, discusses the research findings and makes policy recommendations. A key output of this research is the development of a methodological tool for assessing and evaluating the appropriateness and integration potential of local government policies in each of these three domains.

Research for this report was carried out in Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Patras between January and June 2016. It involved the collection and review of laws pertaining to local government and migration, policy papers, official documents, data provided by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and from the Decentralized Administrations (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*), and data obtained from municipal authorities. We also conducted 48 interviews (14 in Athens, 14 in Thessaloniki, 12 in Heraklion, and 8 in Patras) with representatives of the elected municipal authorities, administrative officials, and with representatives from NGOs and migrant associations; as well as two focus groups in Athens (March 2016) and Thessaloniki (April 2016) with representatives from the same groups.

Even though they do not have an explicit mandate to promote the integration of migrants, Greek municipalities de facto influence how favorable or conversely detrimental the local environment is to the prospects of integration. The establishment of the Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) since 2010 became the first local government body specifically aimed to this end. With all their weaknesses and limitations, the formation of the MIC in a municipality signals its intention to promote integration. They also establish a forum where migrant associations can communicate their concerns and interact with other interested actors in the city. If we consider the MIC as the central pillar of local integration policies, the extent to which local government authorities pursue the latter varies across the Greek municipalities. The views and commitments of the elected mayor and the support that these enjoy among the city's municipal council bear a decisive influence and make a difference. It is entirely up to the elected municipal authority to establish a MIC, and to pursue an explicit and active migrant integration policy.

Even though they have significant numbers of legally resident TCNs, the country's two largest municipalities have not developed a coherent integration strategy. The potential for mainstreaming integration priorities horizontally so that

they be taken into consideration in the provision of services, in the policy and in the practice of the different departments is significant but not exploited. The rich and regularly updated data about the number and profile of migrants in the country, which is collected by the decentralized administrative departments (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*) is not utilized and processed in order to inform municipal policy and practice. Integration actions have mainly taken place in the frame of short term and disparate projects, implemented by different municipal departments and agencies, and funded by the European Integration Fund.

## Migrant integration policies in four municipalities in Greece<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Local government plays a key role in the integration of migrants in Europe. At the very least, its centrality reflects the significance of the local level in the processes whereby individuals and communities interact with one another, come into daily contact with state institutions, and thus develop a sense of belonging to a society (or fail to do so). Well beyond this though, municipalities and other local entities (i.e. community councils, local public agencies, etc.) have assumed an increasingly proactive role in dealing with the reception of newcomers, as well as with the challenges facing the long-term integration of legally residing migrants. Local and municipal authorities, independently or in cooperation with other public agencies and non-governmental organizations, are providers of a large array of social services. They provide services in the area of health, education and social and child care, and they are also responsible for maintaining the social infrastructure of cities where many ethnic and migrant communities live. This report explores the role and policies of local government regarding the integration of migrants in Greece's four largest municipalities: Athens, Thessaloniki, Herakleion and Patras.

Municipalities are involved not only in the context of implementing nationally defined policies, but also in devising their own integration strategies, and even in becoming a source of innovation.<sup>3</sup> Large cities and urban centers in particular are places where the largest numbers of immigrants tend to settle.<sup>4</sup> Since the 1990s, cities in countries like Switzerland, Denmark and Germany have developed targeted integration policies on housing, education and cultural diversity, when such policies had hardly been developed at the national level.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the 2011 EU Agenda for the Integration of TCNs has placed particularly strong emphasis on the active involvement and indispensable role of regional and local authorities in the formulation and implementation of migrant integration policies.<sup>6</sup> The increasingly proactive role of municipalities in the area of migrants' integration is both shaped by and in turn contributes to redefining, the relationship between local and national levels of government.<sup>7</sup>

Despite its importance in confronting multi-ethnic diversity and the challenges of integration, the multifaceted role of local government in this area is neither well understood nor sufficiently researched. The conditions and factors that shape local government responses to migration, as well as their effectiveness in promoting the inclusion of Third Country Nationals (TCNs), have received limited attention in

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<sup>2</sup> All graphs and tables contained in the report were prepared by Markos Konstandakis.

<sup>3</sup> See Gunnar Myrberg, "Local challenges and national concerns: municipal level responses to national refugee settlement policies in Denmark and Sweden", *International Review of Administrative Sciences* (2015), pp. 1-18, at 3.

<sup>4</sup> Between 3/5 and 2/3 of the migrant population in Europe lives in densely populated urban areas or in towns. OECD/European Union, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015 – Settling In* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015), p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Rinus Pennix, "Integration of Migrants: Economic, Social, Cultural and Political Dimensions", *The New Demographic Regime – Population Challenges and Policy Responses*, Miroslav Macura, Alphonse L. MacDonald and Werner Haug (eds.) (Geneva: United Nations, 2005), pp. 137-151, at 149.

<sup>6</sup> See *European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals* (Brussels: European Commission), COM(2011) 455, pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> See Gunnar Myrberg, "Local challenges and national concerns", p. 2.

academic and policy-related research in Greece and in Europe. Existing studies have focused on a few long-standing immigration countries such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark and the United Kingdom, rather than on South European countries.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding an increasing number of studies on local government and migrants, these themes have remained in the periphery of the otherwise voluminous and rapidly growing area of integration studies. We have limited knowledge about the variety of ways in which local authorities in Europe affect the prospects for a more inclusive multi-cultural society, as well as the conditions and factors that enable or constrain local authorities' action in this regard. Why and how policy implementation processes at the local level incorporate (or fail to do so) priorities and goals aimed at immigrant integration in the medium and long-term?

The LOMIGRAS project seeks to contribute towards filling this gap. It explores whether and to the extent to which municipalities in Greece develop and implement policies that influence the integration of migrants in the country. The case of Greece is particularly relevant and instructive for a study on local government and migrant integration for a variety of reasons. As it is well-known, since 2010, the country has been in a protracted economic recession and fiscal crisis that has thoroughly adverse consequences for the incomes, employment opportunities and generally living standards of the Greek population and of immigrants. During the same period, the extreme right-wing and thoroughly anti-immigrant party of Golden Dawn has risen to gain substantial political power, including representation in the Athens municipal council and in the national parliament. Its origins lie in the large urban and densely populated with migrants, areas of the city of Athens, where its stronghold is also to be found. Municipal authorities have been at the center of dealing with the social dislocations stemming from the economic crisis. They have also directly been confronted with local reactions and pressures that find expression in the political extremism of the Golden Dawn and other political parties.

In the context of the massive refugee influx into Greece in 2015 and in 2016 (even if numbers have significantly declined, the influx is ongoing and apparently on the rise in the last weeks of August 2016), the role of municipalities has gained fresh salience. Municipal authorities are expected to effectively assist in providing reception services to the newcomers. At the same time, they are the prime target of opposition on the part of segments of the local population who resist the establishment of refugee reception and accommodation centers.

The LOMIGRAS project set out to study the municipal actions and integration policies in regard to longstanding migrants who began to settle in the country since the late 1980s and especially the 1990s. It has not focused on the more recent and topical issue of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere, who have entered the country through Turkey and into the Greek islands of Chios, Lesbos, Kos and others in 2015-2016. Still, the issue constantly surfaced in the course of our research and it was frequently discussed by our interviewees. Several municipalities have channeled substantial energies and resources towards dealing with refugees. Even though the term of "migrant integration" is commonly used to refer to the newly arriving refugees and migrants, in reality it is a misnomer. The engagement of large municipalities to provide assistance to these groups can be understood as part of a pre-integration phase: it is defined by the reception, temporary accommodation, and

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<sup>8</sup> See for example, Kristina Kallas and Kristjan Kaldur, "Integration Policies and Measures Case Study of Good Practices in Sweden, Denmark and Great Britain" (Institute of Baltic Studies, Tartu, 2007).

fulfilment of the basic needs of people who are not yet permanently settled (at least for a few years). Many of them qualify for the relocation program, which they are likely to use in order to go to and apply for asylum in another EU country.

Integration on the other hand, presupposes that migrants have decided at least for the medium-term and gained the necessary legal status to reside in a particular place and country. It is premised both on the adaptation of migrants and their specific characteristics on the one hand, and on the responses and attitudes of the host society and its institutions towards the newcomers, on the other. This process is inescapably asymmetrical: the infrastructure and resources of the receiving state's institutions are far more influential and decisive in this process and in its outcomes. Secondly, as it has been recognized time and again, the litmus test of immigrant inclusion in the host society is the integration of the second generation migrants. They have either been born in or arrived at the host country at a very young age, where they attended school. Therefore, they are likely to consider the host society the main country to which they belong and where they can live. In so far as the recently (in the course of 2014 and especially 2015 and onwards) arrived migrants and refugees remain in the country of settlement and are granted asylum or some other type of residence permit, they are also targets of migrant integration policies.

Do the municipalities under study pursue the integration of immigrants as a distinct policy objective, or indirectly by mainstreaming it in the different policies that they implement? What factors influence the extent to which migrant integration is pursued? What are some of the obstacles in promoting integration? What are the relations between municipalities, migrant organizations and other NGOs active at the local level? Are there any interesting differences across the four municipalities, and comparative observations?

The rest of this report explores these questions in the four municipalities under study. The first section outlines our conception of integration and defines the immigrant groups who are the target of relevant policies. The second section gives a brief overview of immigration in Greece and in the four municipalities under study, and discusses how municipalities engage in policies that directly target and/or indirectly influence the potential of migrants to integrate in society. The third section analyzes the legal frame for local government powers and competencies, within which general municipal policies but also the actions specifically targeting migrants are decided and implemented. Sections 4-7 focus on the four municipalities under study: Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Patras. Section 8, discusses the research findings and makes policy recommendations.

Our research was carried out in the municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Patras between January and June 2016. It has involved the collection and review of laws pertaining to local government and migration, policy papers, official documents, data provided by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and from the Decentralized Administrations (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*), as well as data that we obtained from administrative authorities in the four municipalities under study. We also conducted 48 interviews (14 in Athens, 14 in Thessaloniki, 12 in Heraklion, and 8 in Patras) with representatives of the elected municipal authorities, administrative officials, and with representatives from NGOs and migrant associations (a list of all interviews is appended as an annex to this report). Our research also draws from two focus groups that were held in Athens

(March 2016) and Thessaloniki (April 2016) with representatives from the same groups.

## **2. Migrant integration policies at the local level: a conceptual frame**

In the perennial debate around integration defined by the granting of equal rights (along with obligations), as well as prohibition of migrants discrimination, on the one hand, and the respect for and maintenance of cultural identity, we give relative emphasis to the former, without, however, overlooking the latter. In this regard, our perspective is in line with mainstream European normative approaches that have sought to strike a balance – a shifting and contentious one to be sure – between the acquisition of civil, political and social rights but also the respect for cultural differences. In the perspective taken by the European Commission in the early 2000s,

“Integration in a democracy presupposes the acquisition of legal and political rights by the new members of a society, so that they can become equal partners... [but it] can also mean that minority groups should be supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities, since the right to cultural choices is intrinsic to democracy” (European Commission, 2002: 9).

Our approach to migrant integration is not informed by a macro-vision of society or by theoretical and political pre-commitments, but it is instead a practical and contextual one. Of fundamental importance for the ability of migrants to successfully claim and achieve equal treatment is the acquisition of basic tools, foremost the learning of the host society language, a task that engages the responsibility of national and local authorities to make the necessary provisions for it. Integration also presupposes that state authorities actively and resolutely enforce equality and non-discrimination. At the same time, national and local authorities must also take into account the specific needs and conditions experienced by different migrant groups – an issue that may sometimes require special efforts on their part, if not distinctive and even temporarily preferential treatment.

Integration policy is predominantly formulated and decided at the national level. However, municipalities, particularly the larger ones in areas where a substantial number of migrants are reside, have substantial leeway and the freedom to influence/promote integration. They can do so both

- a) through the way in which they implement general policies, and how actively they seek to reach and bring in TCNs so that they equally benefit from general policies that target the population at large (i.e. such as social policy, education and urban regeneration, among others), and
- b) through projects and programs that are specifically designed and target TCNs, and which often have to secure outside funding (through ETE, ESPA, or other instruments).

The lack of policy must also be understood as one policy variant defined by inaction (Alexander 2007, 38). We do not assume that the integration of migrants is predominantly influenced by policies, whether national or local. Instead, it depends on critical aspects such the particular local environment where immigrants settle, the structures of the local economy, their residential experiences on the local housing

market and the degree to which they are generally ‘accepted’.<sup>9</sup> Yet, as an issue paper published by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights states,

“While many individual and contextual factors influence the integration process, inclusive policies in different areas of life have a boosting effect on integration outcomes. These policies are helping migrants and their children to be reunited, get basic training, become permanent residents, voters and citizens and know and use their rights as victims of discrimination.”<sup>10</sup>

To what extent do local authorities explicitly or implicitly incorporate immigrant integration priorities and objectives in the frame of implementing their policies in employment, education, social inclusion, anti-discrimination, and civic participation?

In the municipality, a key distinction that can be drawn is between the elected members of the municipal council and the mayor on the one hand, and the administrative personnel on the other.<sup>11</sup> Different members of the municipal council or employees in the municipality’s administrative services may hold different views on the issue. Yet, it is possible to identify a municipal policy on immigrants’ integration that prevails in a given time period. It prevails under the influence of a mayor and/or vocal members of the municipal council, or entrenched views and practices of the administrative services, which give it its distinctive character. As is stated by Caponio, “street-level bureaucrats and policy practitioners represent a crucial category of policymakers insofar as they are able to accommodate the original policy objectives in order to better cope with immigrant needs and/or to overcome obstacles in the delivery of existing services to foreign users”.<sup>12</sup> Last but not least, the municipality is not alone in the implementation of national policies. It regularly engages other important players such as NGOs and national agencies, which, in this study we see as affecting local (municipal) policy-making.

Who are the migrants who are the target of integration policies? In the EU context, “immigrants” are understood to be non-EU, or third country nationals (TCNs) who reside legally in one of the member states of the EU. Their situation often differs markedly from those of EU citizens moving between or living in EU member states other than their own. TCNs face greater restrictions on mobility in the EU. Their reasons for migrating are partly or largely different from those of EU member state nationals, with large numbers of people seeking asylum or family reunification. It is TCNs who are the target of integration policies in the EU and its member states. According to the National Strategy for the Integration of TCNs (hereby the Strategy),<sup>13</sup> besides legally resident TCNs, the targets and recipients of

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<sup>9</sup> Panos Hatziprokopiou, ‘Migration and Changing Urban Geographies in the European South: Evidence from the Case of Immigrants in Thessaloniki’, *Migracijske i etničke teme*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2006), pp. 113–136.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Huddleston, *Time for Europe to get migrant integration right* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, May 2016), pp. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Tiziana Caponio, “Conclusion: making sense of local migration policy arenas”, *The Local Dimension of Migration Policy-Making*, in Tiziana Caponio and Maren Borkert (eds.) (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 188-189.

<sup>12</sup> Tiziana Caponio, “Conclusion: making sense of local migration policy arenas”, p. 179.

<sup>13</sup> The Strategy was formulated by the General Secretariat of the Population and Social Cohesion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2013. Greece / General Secretariat of the Population and Social Cohesion, Ministry of Interior, “Ethniki Stratigiki gia tin entaksi ton politon triton choron” [National Strategy for Immigrant Integration] (2013), pp. 46-49. It can be accessed at

integration policies are also those who are entitled to international protection (i.e. those granted political asylum or a permit to stay in the country for humanitarian reasons). Refugees and asylum-seekers also come under the remit of integration policies, both at the EU level (extension of long-term residence permits to refugees, replacement of EU Integration Fund by the Asylum and Migration Integration Fund), and at the national and local levels. As already mentioned, this is accentuated by the present circumstances of mass refugee flows. In Greece, for example, the mandate of the local Migrant Integration Councils has been extended to refugees and asylum seekers.

The target population of integration policies also encompasses the off-spring of foreign-born persons, who were either born abroad and came at an early age in the host country, or who were born in the host country – that is, the second generation. A significant proportion of the second generation may already be nationals of the host country, excluding them – strictly speaking – from the definition of the migrant population. This poses a problem in how to clearly distinguish the naturalized segment of the second generation as a migrant group. Nonetheless, they are also a crucial target of integration policies. In fact, according to many, it is the incorporation of the second generation that is the key challenge and also benchmark of successful immigrant integration. Whether second generation immigrants, especially if they are nationals of the host country, should be classified as migrants or not is subject to strong controversy. Such a classification can be seen to trigger or intensify a sense of stigmatization and exclusion from the host society.<sup>14</sup>

Legal status is an essential and basic precondition for any foreign-born person to work, have access to goods and rights, live and gradually acquire a sense of belonging in a host society. In some cases though, immigrants who reside in a host country for years may, for longer or shorter periods of time, fall outside of legality. In this sense, the population of undocumented migrants is very diverse, comprising economic migrants who illegally entered a country, but also longer term residents who lost their legal status, who ought to be distinguished from the former group.

The lapse of longer term migrants to illegality has frequently occurred in countries like Greece where legal status is dependent on employment and social security contributions. When immigrants cannot secure the minimum requirements of these as set by law, they may be unable to renew their residence permit. Recognizing that such lapses of legality do not for the most part indicate a change in the actual situation of a migrant and his/her family as long-term residents, legal regulations over the past couple of years in Greece have sought to redress this phenomenon and to facilitate the (re)acquisition and extension of legal status.<sup>15</sup> We therefore include these immigrants among the target population of integration policies. Other categories of undocumented migrants who should come under the remit of integration policies are those who have never acquired some title of legal residence but who have been living long enough (above five years) to forge bonds with the host society. In Greece, many

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[http://www.yypes.gr/UserFiles/f0ff9297-f516-40ff-a70e-eca84e2ec9b9/ethnikisratig\\_30042013.pdf](http://www.yypes.gr/UserFiles/f0ff9297-f516-40ff-a70e-eca84e2ec9b9/ethnikisratig_30042013.pdf). Accessed 30 September 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Rob Bijl, and Arjen Verweij, “Measuring and monitoring immigrant integration in Europe: facts and views”, in *Measuring and monitoring immigrant integration in Europe – Integration policies and monitoring efforts in 17 European countries*, Rob Bijl and Arjen Verweij (eds.) (The Hague: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP), March 2012, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> See “Mia alli stratighiki gia to metanastefitiko” [Another strategy for immigration], position paper drafted by the Hellenic League of Human Rights, April 2012.

of them are therefore eligible for residence permits for “extraordinary” reasons (*ekseretikoi logoi*).<sup>16</sup>

In order to study local government policies on immigrants’ integration, we draw from the classification of the four policy domains, developed by Alexander (2007). The *legal-political domain* includes policies regarding the legal status and the political-civic participation of migrants. Secondly, the *socio-economic domain* comprises social welfare services, labor market policies, education, welfare, etc. Within the social policy sector, local authorities can adopt specific programs or services for migrants, or adapt and render more accessible general health, welfare and other services to migrants and their communities. For example, ways to facilitate migrant access to municipal services can range from translation of information brochures to non-native languages to the provision of ‘cultural mediators’ to help resident migrants and newcomers. Policies to foster migrant participation in the labor market and in the society at large include language instruction, vocational training, and programs to support entrepreneurs, among others. While education is almost always a competence of the national government, local authorities may support extra-curricular activities to assist students (i.e. tutoring and other kinds of assistance with subjects being taught at school, native and migrant language classes for student and parents), or school desegregation efforts, which are crucial for second-generation migrants (Alexander 2007, 50).

The *cultural-religious domain* includes policies relating to religious and cultural practices, and generally cultural diversity. This domain is influenced by municipal authorities’ attitudes towards religious institutions (i.e. mosques) and practices (ethnic and/or festivals), or towards religious schools. Local cultural policies can also include campaigns to increase the awareness of the local host society to ethnic diversity, and they can emphasize anti-discrimination or conversely the acceptance of pluralism and multiculturalism. Finally, the *spatial domain* comprises policies such as housing, urban planning and development, and other policies with a strong spatial dimension, including symbolic use of space evidenced in attempts to discourage or limit physical manifestations of minority religions (i.e. minarets, see Alexander 2007, 48-49).

Local government actions and policies in these four policy domains can vary across the different municipalities in a single country, and they can also change over time. Table 1 depicts the four policy domains, outlines the municipal policies that correspond to each of the four domains, on the basis of which the policies of the four case studies of Greek municipalities are analyzed (section 4 of this report).

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<sup>16</sup> In Greece, Article 19 of Law 4251/2014 (Migration and Social Integration Code), as it was replaced by Article 8, parag. 23, of Law 4332/2015 (Amendment of provisions of the Greek Nationality Code, *Greek Government Gazette*, Vol. 76, 9 July 2015), provides for a residence permit on such grounds.

**Table 1 The four policy domains**

<b>Policy Domains</b>	<b>Municipal Policies</b>	<b>Description – Questions to be addressed</b>
<b>LEGAL-POLITICAL</b>	Political inclusion and participation	How does the Migrant Integration Council (MIC) operate in each municipality? Which migrant communities are included (any excluded and why)? Does it promote civic engagement among migrants, and in what ways does it do so (or does it not do so)? Its potential and its limitations.
	Migrant communities engagement	Do migrants engage with the MIC structures, and generally do they mobilize around the municipality?
	Integration strategy	Has the municipality under study formulated an integration strategy? If not, what kinds of integration-related measures/actions/ etc. does it have in place? What factors influence how the municipal authorities approach integration, and the strategy they adopt (if they adopt one)?
	Equal treatment/non-discrimination	Does the municipal authority explicitly and publicly espouse, apply and enforce non-discrimination in its relations with citizens and non-citizens alike? In what ways does it do so?
<b>SOCIAL-ECONOMIC</b>	Social services/provisions	What are the kinds of social allowances and other kinds of social programs (i.e. health-related services, counseling, vouchers, etc., etc.) that municipalities have in place to support the poor and low-income families? Do migrants have access to those programs? Do municipal services/departments actively seek to disseminate information to migrants? What are the main obstacles in migrants' access to social services provided by the municipality? Can you estimate (or do you have such data on) how many migrants apply and how many are beneficiaries of the different social allowances and programs?
	Day care	What is the policy/approach of municipal authorities in regard to migrants' children in day care? Do migrants' children have

		access to day care? Do municipal services/departments actively seek to disseminate information to migrants? What are the main obstacles in migrants' access to municipal day care services? Can you estimate (or do you have data on) how many migrants' families apply and how many are beneficiaries of day care services?
	Employment	Describe any programs that the municipality has implemented to promote employment and vocational training? Do these seek to include migrants, and in what ways?
	Education/children	What programs and policies do municipal authorities and communes pursue (alone or in cooperation with NGOs) in order to promote integration of migrants' children in education?
	Language teaching	Do municipal authorities (alone or in cooperation with NGOs) actively seek funding for organizing language courses? Do they run language courses for migrants?
<b>CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS</b>	Cultural policy	Do municipal authorities (alone or in cooperation with NGOs) organize activities to support, acknowledge or celebrate non-native cultures?
	Places of worship/mosques	What are the municipal policies in regard to places of worship and mosques in particular?
<b>SPATIAL</b>	Urban planning policies	Not relevant for Greek municipalities

### 3. Immigration and migrants integration policy in Greece

Once known for its large-scale emigration, Greece has transitioned to a country of destination since the late 1980s and the 1990s mainly. The bulk of immigrants came from the Balkans, Central-Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union after the downfall of communist regimes in the region. Until the first years of 2000, the push factors from abroad coincided with a period of economic growth in Greece and changes in the employment structure and professional opportunities available to locals. Such changes led to a demand for labor from abroad to fill vacancies for unskilled and, often undeclared, jobs (for instance, in construction tourism,

agriculture, cleaning services and care), thus leading to a massive migration influx.<sup>17</sup> During the last decade, and particularly since 2008, Greece has become a transit and destination country for immigrants and asylum seekers arriving from Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Greece has also been both a transit and a destination country for large numbers of undocumented migrants from the 1990s until present.

The number of the total immigrant population in Greece can only be estimated with approximation, rather than near accuracy, by taking into account data from the most recent population census and the issuing of residence permits. During the 2011 census, the resident population of TCNs in Greece was 712,879 (7.5% of the total population) of which 385,773 (54%) were male and 327,106 female (46%).<sup>18</sup> Data from the Ministry of the Interior database on valid stay permits, put the number of legally residing TCNs at 501,351 in April 2016. The legally residing population of TCNs in Greece includes mostly individuals with Albanian citizenship (76%). They are followed by individuals coming from the former Republics of the Soviet Union, including Ukrainians, Georgians, Russians and Moldovans, and by people from India, Philippines and Pakistan (see Table 2). Men constitute slightly over half (52.4%) of the total legal immigrant stock, and women make up 47.6% of the legally residing immigrant population (see Figure 1). At the same time, the gender balance in the composition of the various ethnic groups though is very uneven and heterogeneous. Women make up less than 17.6% of immigrants from Pakistan and India while they comprise over 82% of immigrants from Ukraine, 81.3% of those coming from Russia, and 71% and 76% for those from Georgia and Moldova, respectively (Ministry of Interior, 2016, see Table 2).

**Table 2: TCNs by nationality and gender in Greece (19-4-2016)**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Albania	209,566	171,190	380,756
Ukraine	3,468	15,945	19,413
Georgia	5,234	12,848	18,082
Pakistan	14,946	1,528	16,474
Russia	2,746	11,944	14,690
India	10,397	3,869	14,266
Egypt	8,938	3,031	11,969
Moldova	2,220	6,920	9,140
Philippines	2,811	7,373	10,184

<sup>17</sup> Anna Triantafyllidou, "Migration and Migration Policy in Greece. Critical Review and Policy Recommendations", *IDEA Policy Briefs* 3, (2009), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> The number includes 4,876 foreigners that declared no citizenship or no specified citizenship. Source: HSA. Data provided upon request.

Armenia	2,365	4,013	6,378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>262,691</b>	<b>238,661</b>	<b>501,351</b>

Data is based on the number of individuals in possession of a valid residence permit by country of origin by reference date 19.4.2016, from the 10 main countries of origin. [Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction]

Since 2009 with the onset of the financial crisis and economic recession, the number of residence permits for TCNs issued by the Ministry of Interior declined.<sup>19</sup> Such a decline is possibly linked to the deep economic recession and austerity measures which have especially affected immigrants, a situation also evidenced in other southern European countries such as Italy and Spain.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the decline seemed to last only for some years, as the number of TCNs who are residence permit holders in Greece picked up again in 2015 and in 2016. Research has amply demonstrated that the practical difficulty among immigrants to fulfil the requirements necessary to obtain or renew a permit contributes to a continuing or lapsed state of illegality, also due to the largely informal and seasonal character of migrant employment in Greece.<sup>21</sup> This is particularly the case with immigrant female domestic workers who are largely confined to undeclared work.<sup>22</sup> According to an OECD report, more than 150,000 non-EU citizens in Greece were unable to renew their permits in 2010 and 2011 due to unemployment.<sup>23</sup> It may be that many of them who could not renew their permits, or who were unable to find employment, have left the country, yet data to support this conjecture are not officially collected. While there was an apparently increasing trend of Albanian migrants, the most numerous group among TCNs, to return to their homeland,<sup>24</sup> this is not corroborated by the more recent 2016 data (provided in Table 1 above), which shows that the number of Albanian migrants in Greece remains high.

Migration policy in Greece, including in regard to integration, is a competence of national government and its competent ministries, pre-eminently the Deputy Ministry for Migration, part of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. Until well into the 2000s, Greek migration policy consisted of a series of ad hoc regularization programs – four in total – aimed at the legalization of the

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the causes, see Dia Anagnostou and Anna Kandyla, “Review of Existing Monitoring Mechanisms for the Integration of Migrants in Greece”, Report prepared in the frame of the ASSESS Project on the Integration of Vulnerable Migrants, ELIAMEP, June 2015, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Tamara Jonjic and Georgia Mavrodi, “Immigration in the EU: policies and politics in times of crisis 2007-2012”, *EUDO Paper*, Florence: EUI, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, November 2012, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> See indicatively, Thanos Maroukis, “Irregular Migration in Greece: Size, Features, Causes and Discourses”, *Irregular Migration in Europe: Myths and Realities*, Anna Triantafyllidou (ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 93-113, at 101-105.

<sup>22</sup> See Michaela Marouf, “‘With All the Cares in the World’: Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Greece”, *Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?* Anna Triantafyllidou (ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 95-114.

<sup>23</sup> OECD, “OECD International Migration Outlook 2013. Greece”, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013), p. 256.

<sup>24</sup> Anna Triantafyllidou, “Migration in Greece: People, Policies and Practices”. *IRMA project report* (2013), p. 8. It can be accessed at [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl\\_36858\\_19016118.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_36858_19016118.pdf). Accessed May 20, 2014.

hundreds of thousands of immigrants that had entered the country since 1990. They enabled large numbers of undocumented TCNs residing in the country to obtain short-term and under conditions renewable residence permits.<sup>25</sup> Integration did not become a priority or an explicit objective of migration policy until 2005. Law 3386/2005 on the “Entry, stay and integration of TCNs in Greece” is considered as the first law recognizing the reality of immigration as a long-term and permanent phenomenon, even though it did not explicitly address integration issues. Its main aim was to transpose the EU directives 2003/86 on the right to family reunification and 2003/109 on the status of long-term residents. Basic knowledge of Greek language, history and culture were determined as prerequisites for acquiring long-term residence status. Regarding undocumented migrants, Law 3386/2005 explicitly prohibited such migrants from accessing services provided by Greek public entities, local government bodies, and social security organizations (Article 84).<sup>26</sup>

Law 3386/2005 included two articles that showed a concern with integration (Articles 65-66). These provisions conceived of integration as the equal participation of migrants in the country’s economic, social and cultural life, in the provision of rights for migrants but also in their obligation to respect the fundamental norms and values of Greek society. The promise of equal treatment for integrated immigrants was also to be delivered by law with the transposition of the EU’s Race Directive that prohibited discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin.<sup>27</sup> The Action Plan for the integration of migrants that Law 3386/2005 introduced highlighted the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment of TCNs, along with respect for their cultural and religious identity. At the same time, the same law saw as necessary actions and initiatives for the certified knowledge of Greek language, successful enrolment in courses on history and culture of Greece, integration in the labor market and active social participation (Article 66, parag. 4). These axes of integration policy clearly reflected the EU member states’ consensus captured in the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU adopted in November 2004.

Law 3838/2010 introduced by the Socialist PASOK government and adopted by Parliament in March 2010. Along with extending political rights to TCNs at the local level, the Law was the most important and politically challenging attempt to promote their social integration in Greece.<sup>28</sup> It made it possible for children who were born in Greece and who had at least one non-Greek parent residing legally in the country for five consecutive years, to acquire nationality at birth (Art. 1). Children of immigrants, who had attended at least six grades of Greek school, could also acquire citizenship through a simple declaration by their parents within three years following the completion of the required six-year schooling period (Art. 1A, par. 2). In addition, immigrants who legally resided in Greece for at least seven consecutive years could apply for naturalization (Article 5A, par. 1d). At the same time and in line with the

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<sup>25</sup> Regularization programs were adopted in 2001, 2005 and 2007 in Greece on the basis of Laws 2910/2001 (02.05.2001), 3386/2005 (23.08.2005), and 3536/2007 (23.02.2007) respectively.

<sup>26</sup> The only exception were a) the provision of emergency health care and health care to minors by hospitals, and b) the enrolment of all children in Greek schools irrespective of whether their parents have legal residence status (the latter was based on the interpretation of the UN Convention for the Rights of Children by the Greek Ombudsman).

<sup>27</sup> This was Directive 2002/43 EC, and it was transposed in the Greek legal order with Law 3304/2005.

<sup>28</sup> Greece / Law 3838/2010 (24.03.2010).

trend for more intensive integration tests in a number of European countries,<sup>29</sup> the new law also required passing a test verifying an individual's knowledge of Greek history, institutions and civilization.<sup>30</sup> Besides facilitating nationality acquisition, Law 3838/2010 also extended to TCNs the right to vote and stand as candidates in local elections. However, Law 3838 was short-lived as a Council of State decision in 2013 struck both the nationality acquisition for migrants and local voting rights for TCNs as unconstitutional.

The Immigration and Social Integration Code (ISIC) that was adopted in 2014 substituted immediate nationality acquisition for the second generation with a) the promotion of long-term residence status and b) a special permit for the second generation. The Code made it easier for those holding permits of long-term duration to acquire the long-term residence status (defined by EU law and accompanied with an increased set of rights that its holders enjoy across EU countries). However, the conditions for qualifying for a long-term residence permit after a minimum of five years of living in the country are very demanding.<sup>31</sup> In addition to an eligibility criterion related to residence and income, the Code requires that applicants meet "the conditions for integration into the Greek society". These are considered to be fulfilled when they can prove a level of language proficiency and knowledge of history and civilization,<sup>32</sup> when they hold a residence card as family members of a Greek citizen, and when they have been living in Greece for the last 12 years.<sup>33</sup> Legal migrants have equal rights with Greek citizens but also new obligations, the central one being to respect the laws and fundamental values of Greek society.<sup>34</sup> Policies and actions in pursuit of immigrants' integration must be based on the prohibition of any kind of discrimination based on constitutional principles, and they should respect the fundamental rights of TCNs and their cultural differences.<sup>35</sup>

The special second-generation permit provided for by the ISIC was aimed to secure legal residence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation until they become adults, when they could apply for the acquisition of Greek nationality. Second-generation immigrants were defined as 'adult TCNs who are native-born or who have successfully completed six years of Greek schooling.'<sup>36</sup> The Code enabled them to acquire a special residence permit for the second generation upon reaching 21 years of age, provided that they reside legally in Greece. While this permit put the second generation migrants on an equal position and endowed them with all the rights corresponding to long-term resident status,<sup>37</sup> it did not address their exclusion from various professions, where

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<sup>29</sup> Rainer Baubock and Christian Joppke (eds), "How Liberal are Citizenship Tests?" EUDO Citizenship Observatory, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, EUI Working Papers, no. 41 (2010).

<sup>30</sup> Additionally seen to testify someone's willingness to become a Greek citizen were factors such as participation in political and civil society organizations, and involvement in economic activity, among others, see Art. 5A of Law 3838/2010 (24.03.2010).

<sup>31</sup> See Arts 88-89 Law 4251/2014 (01.04.2014).

<sup>32</sup> Greece/ Art 67 Law 3356/2005 (23.08.2005) listed certification of knowledge of the Greek language and history among the eligibility criteria for a long-term residence permit.

<sup>33</sup> See Arts 88 and 89(2) and 90 of Law 4251/2014 (01.04.2014). On the proposal of the Special Naturalisation Committee within the Ministry of Interior, see the Greek Nationality Code, Law 3284/2004 (10.11.2004). Beneficiaries of international protection are also, on conditions, eligible for the long-term permit.

<sup>34</sup> Law 4251/2014, Article 128.

<sup>35</sup> Law 4251/2014, Article 128.

<sup>36</sup> Art. 108 of Law 4251/2014 (01.04.2014).

<sup>37</sup> Art. 108 of Law 4251/2014 (01.04.2014).

Greek nationality is a prerequisite.<sup>38</sup> Under the left government of SYRIZA (in alliance with the right wing ANEL), nationality acquisition for the second generation immigrants was reintroduced with Law 4332/2015 that was passed in Parliament in 2015<sup>39</sup> with the support of the center left parties (PASOK, Potami).<sup>40</sup> It increased the length of parents' residence along with making more stringent (in comparison to Law 3838/2010) the related requirements (i.e. type of residence permit). It also increased the required years of school attendance (from 6 years to 9 years) in Greece, for second generation immigrants to obtain Greek nationality<sup>41</sup>, arguably at the expense of restricting the number of migrants who are immediately eligible for Greek nationality.<sup>42</sup>

As elsewhere in Europe, migrant integration policies in Greece have been slow to develop and at best ambivalent. In comparison to other EU countries, Greece has not shown remarkable progress. The Migrant Integration Policy Index places Greece in the 27<sup>th</sup> position among 38 countries examined.<sup>43</sup> Opportunities for education, health, political participation and access to nationality are viewed as problematic. In spite of this and despite the fact that integration policy-making is a competence of the national government, the local government and municipalities have substantial leeway to implement their general policies in a way that takes into account integration objectives, as well as to put to action specifically targeted measures to promote the well-being and participation of TCNs at the local level. In order to explore this, we must first place it in the shifting institutional, territorial and legal frame that shapes the competences of local government in Greece.

#### **4. The role and competences of municipalities in regard to migrant integration in Greece**

The structures of the Greek state comprise three levels of administration and governance: the central, the regional, and the local level. The central level includes the national government, the ministries and the various departments and agencies of public administration. The regional level comprises 13 regions. Regional councils and the regional governor are popularly elected every five years. The local level consists of 325 municipalities, where the municipal councils and mayors are also directly elected by popular vote every five years. Since the late 1980s and especially since the 1990s, a series of reforms have sought to modernize, restructure and decentralize the

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<sup>38</sup> See Eda Gemi, "Immigration Code: New Solutions to Old Problems?", ELIAMEP Briefing Notes no. 24/2013, November 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Law 4332/2015, "Tropopioisi diatakseon kodika ellinikis ithageneias kai alles diatakseis" [Amendment of provisions of the Greek Nationality Code and other provisions], *Efimerida tis Kyverniseos* [Government Gazette], no. 76, 9 July 2015.

<sup>40</sup> See *Proceedings of the Greek Parliament*, Thursday 9 July 2015, p. 4259.

<sup>41</sup> Article 1 of Law 4332/2015 provides for the acquisition of Greek nationality for TCNs who are born in Greece, not automatically, but once they enroll in the first grade of the primary school and on the condition that at least one parent legally resides in Greece for five consecutive years. See also Article 2 of same law.

<sup>42</sup> See Niko Ago, "Nomoschedio gia tin ithagenia: atolmo, deilo, ligo" [Draft law on nationality: undaring, timid, too little]. It can be accessed at

<http://www.protagon.gr/?i=protagon.el.article&id=41447> (last accessed 3 January 2016)

<sup>43</sup> Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015 website, available at: <http://www.mipex.eu/greece> [accessed June 2016].

public administration and the country's territorial and government structures. They have sought to strengthen local government entities in Greece,<sup>44</sup> as well as to promote a degree of decentralization – both trends that are evidenced in many European countries.<sup>45</sup> A number of competencies were transferred from the center to the local level in order to decentralize services and to better serve the citizens.<sup>46</sup> Yet, despite a degree of decentralization, overall and in comparison to most European states, Greece continues to be characterized by a high degree of state centralism.

Besides transferring competencies from the central to the local level, reform initiatives since the 1980s have brought about a gradual reduction in the total number of local government entities.<sup>47</sup> In 1998, a major reform of local government known by the name of “Ioannis Kapodistrias” (Law 2539/1997) merged a large and highly fragmented structure of 5775 municipalities and communes into 1034.<sup>48</sup> The *Kapodistrias plan* was an important step forward in modernizing and strengthening the structures of local self-governance and administration.<sup>49</sup> However, the reform did not succeed to change the structure of local government. The process of decentralization and the strengthening of the institutions of local self-government remained incomplete. A large number of powers and competences remained under the control of the central government and administration.<sup>50</sup> Still, the *Kapodistrias* reform was a first step that paved the way for further reforms in the direction of decentralization of local government and the modernization of public administration at the local level.<sup>51</sup>

A major turning point in the reform process of the territorial, administrative and local government structures was the adoption of Law 3852/2010 “New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration” known by the name of “Kallikratis”, which entered into force in 2011.<sup>52</sup> The reform reorganized local and decentralized public administration by transferring a host of new responsibilities and competencies to municipalities while at the same time further consolidating the number of local government entities. It reduced the number of municipalities and communes from 1034 to 325 municipalities, thereby merging a

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<sup>44</sup> Andreas Leotsakos et al., “Social Policy implementation of Kallikratis program: Review and critique”, in *Socio-Economic Sustainability, Regional Development and Spatial Planning: European and International Dimensions and Perspective* (2014), p.243

<sup>45</sup> Christoforos Skamnakis, “Inequality and Social Protection at the LOCAL Level: Undermining of Reinforcing Social Policy?” *The Greek Review of Social Research* (2011), p. 55

<sup>46</sup> Andreas Leotsakos et al., “Social Policy implementation of Kallikratis program”, p.243.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview, see Nikolaos-Komninos Chlepas, *Domi kai leitourgia ton dimon stin Ellada* [Structure and function of municipalities in Greece], a publication of the Greek-German Assembly (2014).

<sup>48</sup> Christina Akrivopoulou, Georgios Dimitropoulos, Stylianos-Ioannis G. Koutnatzis, “The ‘Kallikratis Program’: The Influence of International and European Policies on the Reforms of Greek Local Government”, *Istituzioni del federalism*, no. 3 (2012), pp. 653-694, at 672. See also Christoforos Skamnakis, *Smaller Governments – Less Social Policy? Case study in Greek Local Authorities, rise and fall* (2011), p. 6. Available at <http://www.socialpolicy.org.uk/lincoln2011/Skamnakis%20P3.pdf> accessed on 19/04/2016].

<sup>49</sup> Christoforos Skamnakis, “Smaller Governments – Less Social Policy? Case study in Greek Local Authorities, rise and fall” (2011). Paper available at <http://www.socialpolicy.org.uk/lincoln2011/Skamnakis%20P3.pdf> (accessed on 19/04/2016).

<sup>50</sup> Christoforos Skamnakis, “Smaller Governments – Less Social Policy?” p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> Christina Akrivopoulou, Georgios Dimitropoulos, Stylianos-Ioannis G. Koutnatzis, “The ‘Kallikratis Program’: The Influence of International and European Policies”, p. 675

<sup>52</sup> Law 3852/2010, “New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration –Project Kallikratis”.

large number of communes into a smaller number of territorially and administratively larger local government entities.<sup>53</sup> In this way, it transformed municipalities into entities with potentially augmented capacity, even if it did not correspondingly expand their fiscal, administrative and political autonomy from the central state.<sup>54</sup>

The ‘Kallikratis’ reform sought to rationalize resources and local spending by creating economies of scale. It also improved service delivery to citizens and enterprises at the local level through the implementation of new technologies. Regarding citizen’s participation, the Law (3852/2010) introduced considerable measures to enhance representation and consultation process.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, the “Kallikratis” reform transformed the 13 administrative regions into units of local self-government with directly elected regional councils (as opposed to centrally appointed bodies that they were until then). Between the regional and the national level, it also established 7 decentralized administrative units (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*) that are units of the central state in the region.

The *Kallikratis* plan also increased the competencies of municipalities, above all in the sphere of social policy. The provision of social services is at the center of reform, like others self-governing structures in many European countries.<sup>56</sup> The new responsibilities that were transferred to the municipalities in the field of social policy were related to day care, the protection of elderly people, support for families and vulnerable groups, the implementation of public health programs, and the tackling of social exclusion and marginalization of the poor, the immigrants, and the uninsured.<sup>57</sup> Municipalities establish and/or operate nurseries, orphanages, care centres, centres of entertainment for the elderly, nursing homes etc., as well as other social programs.<sup>58</sup> The *Kallikratis* reform provides for a wide array of municipal competencies in the sphere of health.<sup>59</sup> Municipal authorities issue certificates of economic difficulties and to provide the payment of allowance in certain categories of citizens, among others.<sup>60</sup> With respect to the Roma, immigrants, refugees and returning expatriates, municipalities are responsible for implementing programs or participating in actions aimed at their social, economic and cultural integration. More broadly, vulnerable social groups are supported through the provision of a variety of municipal health services.<sup>61</sup>

The acute and protracted fiscal and economic crisis that set in in the country since 2009-2010 has had far-reaching and contradictory consequences on municipalities and their competencies, particularly in regard to social policy – a sector that is especially relevant and crucial for the integration of immigrants. On the one hand, the fiscal and economic crisis has resulted in a substantial decline of the financial resources, of which municipalities dispose. In 2009-2013, central transfers to the municipalities decreased by 60%, leading to a significant reduction in the size of

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<sup>53</sup> OECD (2012), “Better Regulation in Europe: Greece 2012”, OECD Publishing. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264179288-en>, p.109

<sup>54</sup> Article 78 of Law 3852/2010 (07.06.2010) on the “New Architecture of the structure of Local Authorities and Decentralized Administration”.

<sup>55</sup> OECD (2012), “Better Regulation in Europe: Greece 2012”, OECD Publishing. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264179288-en>, p.109.

<sup>56</sup> Christoforos Skamnakis, “Smaller Governments – Less Social Policy?” p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Andreas Leotsakos et al., “Social Policy implementation of Kallikratis program”, p. 245.

<sup>58</sup> Law 3463/2006 ‘Code for Municipalities and Communities’, Article 75.

<sup>59</sup> Law 3463/2006 ‘Code for Municipalities and Communities’, Article 75.

<sup>60</sup> Law 3852/2010 ‘Reorganization of Local Government - Kallikratis Program’, Article 94.

<sup>61</sup> Law 3852/2010 ‘Reorganization of Local Government - Kallikratis Program’, Article 94.

their administrative personnel, and creating substantial burdens in their ability to implement the expanded array of competencies that were transferred to the municipalities with “Kallikratis”.<sup>62</sup>

At the same time, during the same period, there has been a significant increase of the people at risk of exclusion due to unemployment and the drastic decline of salaries and family incomes. As a result, the number of beneficiaries of social services and benefits of social protection grew at the local level, despite the reduction of resources from central transfers.<sup>63</sup> While in part this has been possible through an increase of private donations and contributions (especially in the larger municipalities), for most part, municipalities have been able to provide an expanded array and volume of social services by channeling more resources in this sector in order to address the greater needs of the local population. It is during this period of crisis that structures such as ‘social groceries’ providing food, clothing, books, toys, household, etc. for citizens have been established. In cooperation with local networks and voluntary organizations, municipalities have played a key role in enhancing solidarity by providing social support and care services.

With the “Kallikratis” reform, but also earlier, municipalities have an array of competencies that directly as well as indirectly but profoundly affect the position of migrants. Furthermore, they have de facto and over time acquired an increasing role in regard to integration, either by implementing national law on migration, and/or in the frame of providing services to local inhabitants, including TCNs. As early as 2001, Law 2910/2001 gave municipal authorities competencies in the implementation of regularization programs and in matters related to migrants’ documentation. Municipal administrations were assigned responsibility for receiving applications and for the issuing and renewal of residence permits. They forwarded applications for residence permits to the decentralized state administration (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*) located in the regions’ departments, which represent the central state and its ministries. The legal frame for municipalities to acquire specific competencies in regard to migrants’ integration was established with the Code of Communes and Municipalities (Law 3463/2006, Art. 75).

The competencies to receive applications for residence permits were removed from municipalities in 2010 and were transferred to the regional administration. The rationale for such a transfer was largely linked to the entrenched assumption that the granting of residence permits to foreigners is a prerogative of the sovereign national state rather than of the local government. Local government authorities were in any case only mediating agents prior to 2010, with residence permits still being issued by the competent national ministry (Ministry of Interior and Administrative Restructuring, in Greek *Ypourgeio Esoterikon kai Dioikitikis Anasingrotisis*). Still, prior to 2010 when they acted as mediators, local government authorities were able to intervene in the course of processing residence permit applications and occasionally charge extra fees from applicants. The transferred of this competence from municipalities to the *apokentromenes dioikiseis* was also triggered by revelations about the existence of local networks procuring false permits.

In the 2000s, especially in the second half of the decade, municipalities of large cities, like the capital of Athens, with a high concentration of migrant population, engaged in a variety of actions targeting immigrant residents, such as

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<sup>62</sup> Nikolaos-Komninos Chlepas, *Domi kai leitourgia ton dimon stin Ellada*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Andreas Leotsakos et al., “Social Policy implementation of Kallikratis program”, p. 245.

providing courses teaching Greek language, and vocational training programs, among others. Municipalities also provided a host of basic services for vulnerable groups, such as soup kitchens, medical exams, and day care services, radio news in different languages, among others, on a par to migrants as to Greeks.<sup>64</sup> Those programs specifically targeting migrants were financed by particular financial instruments, such as the European Integration Fund. Altogether though, they did not amount to an explicitly formulated municipal integration policy, even in the large municipalities, such as Athens.

Since 2010 though, the involvement of municipalities in integration-related matters has grown, especially in the large cities of Greece. The active role that municipalities ought to assume in the area of migration and integration was explicitly recognized with the 'Kallikratis' reform described earlier. It was given institutional form with the establishment of Migrant Integration Councils (hereby MICs) in every municipality.<sup>65</sup> The establishment of the MICs were an institutional innovation intended to promote the political and civic participation of immigrants at the local level. Their mission is to inform the municipal government about the problems that the migrants face in the respective region, to present proposals for actions aimed at the integration of the migrants in the local government and policy-making structures, and to assist migrants in accessing the regional and municipal services. They can do so by undertaking a variety of tasks, such as to map the immigrant communities and their associations, to involve them in local government structures and policy-making, and to identify and probe into integration problems that must be redressed in the municipalities with high concentration of TCNs. Even though they have no decisive and decision-making powers, the MICs could also serve as important bodies for coordinating synergies and cooperation between municipal authorities and migrant associations.

The MICs though have so far remained largely inactive, with the exception of such councils set up in the municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Herakleion and other municipalities where large immigrant populations are concentrated. In part, an important constraint has been the lack of adequate resources and administrative support, which has not allowed the MICs to perform the role envisioned in the 'Kallikratis' reform. A shortage of resources due to the economic crisis as well as the lack of specialized personnel also render burdensome their effective operation.<sup>66</sup> In those few municipalities where they exist, they function as a consultative but little active body<sup>67</sup> that has been weak in channeling the political representation of migrant communities. Researchers argue that the MICs are unable to overcome the difficulties and weaknesses of local government interventions,<sup>68</sup> and that the success of their

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<sup>64</sup> Panagiotis Psathas, *Topiki aftodioikisi kai metanastefsi. To provlima tis ypersingentrosis allodapon triton choron sto kentro tis Athinas*, MA Thesis, National School of Public Administration and Local Self-government (Athens, 2010), pp. 46-48.

<sup>65</sup> Law 3463/2006, 'Code for Municipalities and Communities', Article 75.

<sup>66</sup> Theodoros Fouskas, 'Representing the unrepresented? Operation and representativeness of Migrant Integration Councils in Greece', *Social Cohesion and Development*, 2013. Vol. 8. No. 2, pp. 127-150.

<sup>67</sup> Markos Papakonstantis, "Ta Symvoulia Entaksis Metanaston sto Plaisio tis Politikis Entaksis Ypikoou Triton Choron" [The Immigrant Integration Councils in the Framework of Social Integration of TCNs], *Koinoniki Sinochi kai Anaptiksi*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2013): 107-126, at 111.

<sup>68</sup> 'Christoforos Skamnakis and Periklis Polizoidis', *Simvoulia Entaksis Metanaston: Hi atelis litourgia enos simantikou thesmou gia tis autodioikisi*, *Social Cohesion and Development*, 2013. Vol. 8. No. 2, pp. 165-176.

initiatives depends on the innovation practices of the mayor and on the commitment of municipality councils.<sup>69</sup>

## 5. Migrants and integration policies in the four municipalities under study

More than half of the legal migrants live in the greater area of Athens, and a quarter can be found in Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city to the north. In order to gain an estimate of their number, we use the data about the number of residence permits issued annually by the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction (we use data from March 2016). Thus it is only an approximation of the actual number of migrants who are TCNs, which however depicts the frequent demographic shifts of this population, unlike the census data that is collected once every ten years. The data from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction is collected for the entire urban areas, in which our four municipalities are found, and it therefore provides us with an estimate of migrants not only in the geographical and administrative boundaries of each municipality, but in the broader urban areas of Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras and Herakleio (where there are several other municipalities). For Athens and Thessaloniki in particular, we were able to obtain data specifically for these municipalities from the respective Regional Administrative Departments (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*).

A large number of migrants are concentrated in the four municipalities under study, as well as in the urban areas within which these municipalities are situated. According to the residence permits data of the Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, the following number of residence permits were issued in the four urban areas of the municipalities under study in 2015-2016 (data of March 2016): Athens (146,538), Thessaloniki (45,695), Patras (10,315) and Heraklion (12,600) (Figure 1). The breakdown by gender is depicted in Figure 2.

Since 2010, an increasing number of migrants have applied for and acquired Greek nationality in the four municipalities under study, and especially in Athens, as figures 3 and 4 show. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors. In the first place, the passage of Law 3838/2010, which for the short period of time that it was in force enabled a significant number of second generation migrants to apply for and gain Greek nationality. It can also be attributed to the fact that an increasing number of migrants have completed the minimum of ten years that are required for someone to apply for naturalization. The number of applications for the acquisition of Greek nationality remained relatively high in 2013-2015, especially in the municipality of Athens, despite the fact that the provisions for *ius soli* acquisition of nationality of the second generation introduced with Law 3838/2010 were suspended. Possibly the anticipation of a new legislative initiative maintained a strong interest among migrants. In 2015 the passage of Law 4332/2015 that amended the Greek Nationality Code and enabled migrant children who went to school in Greece to apply

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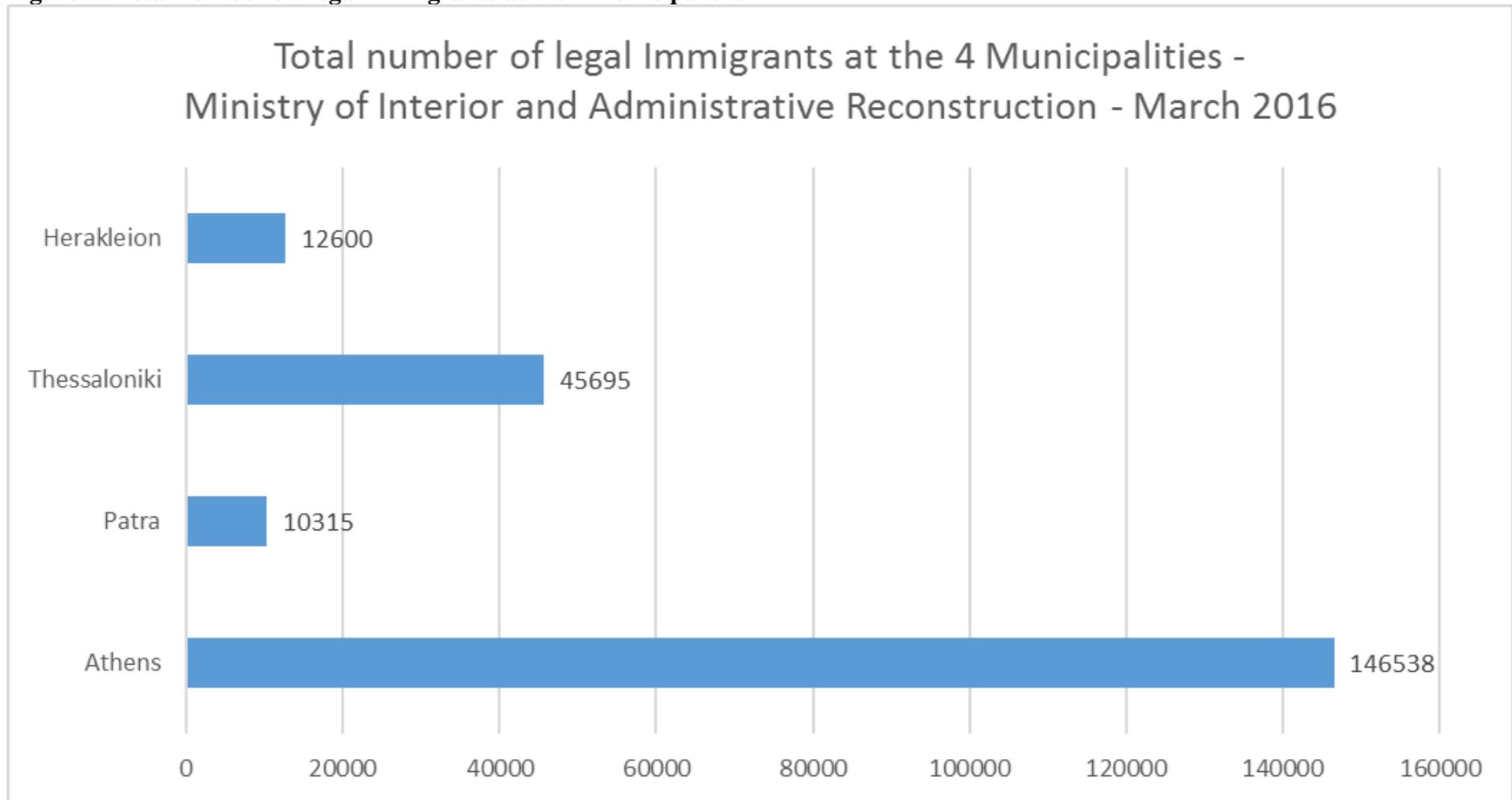
<sup>69</sup> Nikos Sarris, 'Hi simvoli ton simvoulion entaksis metanaston stin prooptiki entaksis metanaston stin Ellada', in *Entaksi ton Metanaston: Antilipsis, Politikes, Praktikes*, edited by Alexandros Afouksenidis, Nikos Sarris, Olga Tsakiridi, 2012, available at: [http://www.ekke.gr/open\\_books/EntaxiMetanaston.pdf](http://www.ekke.gr/open_books/EntaxiMetanaston.pdf) [accessed June 2016].

for nationality (see section 2 of this report) also accounts for ongoing stream of applications for Greek nationality.

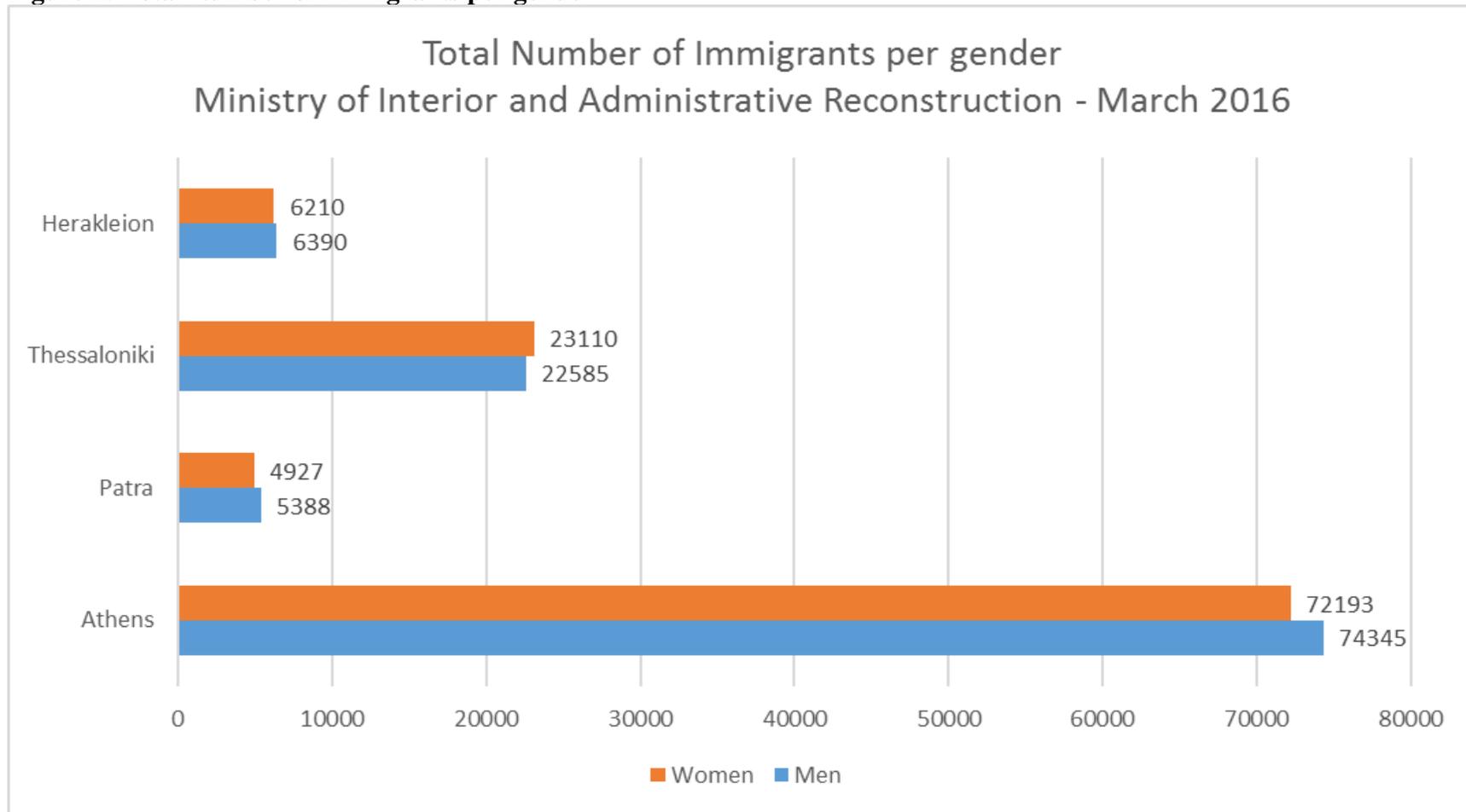
The growth in the number of migrants, especially among the second generation, who have been seeking Greek nationality, is significant. It shows that an increasing number of migrants who have been living in Greece with their families for several years intend to remain permanently in the country. They have thus achieved or are willing to achieve a degree of integration.

In the next four sections, the findings based on the data collected and the interviews conducted, will be presented for each of the four municipalities. The main purpose of these sections is to describe a) the municipal policies and programs that are relevant for migrants' integration, b) whether and the extent to which such policies take into account the needs and particular difficulties (i.e. to accessing information) that migrants may face; and whether the principle of equality and non-discrimination is explicitly applied, c) the programs specifically targeting immigrants, which have been implemented over the past ten years.

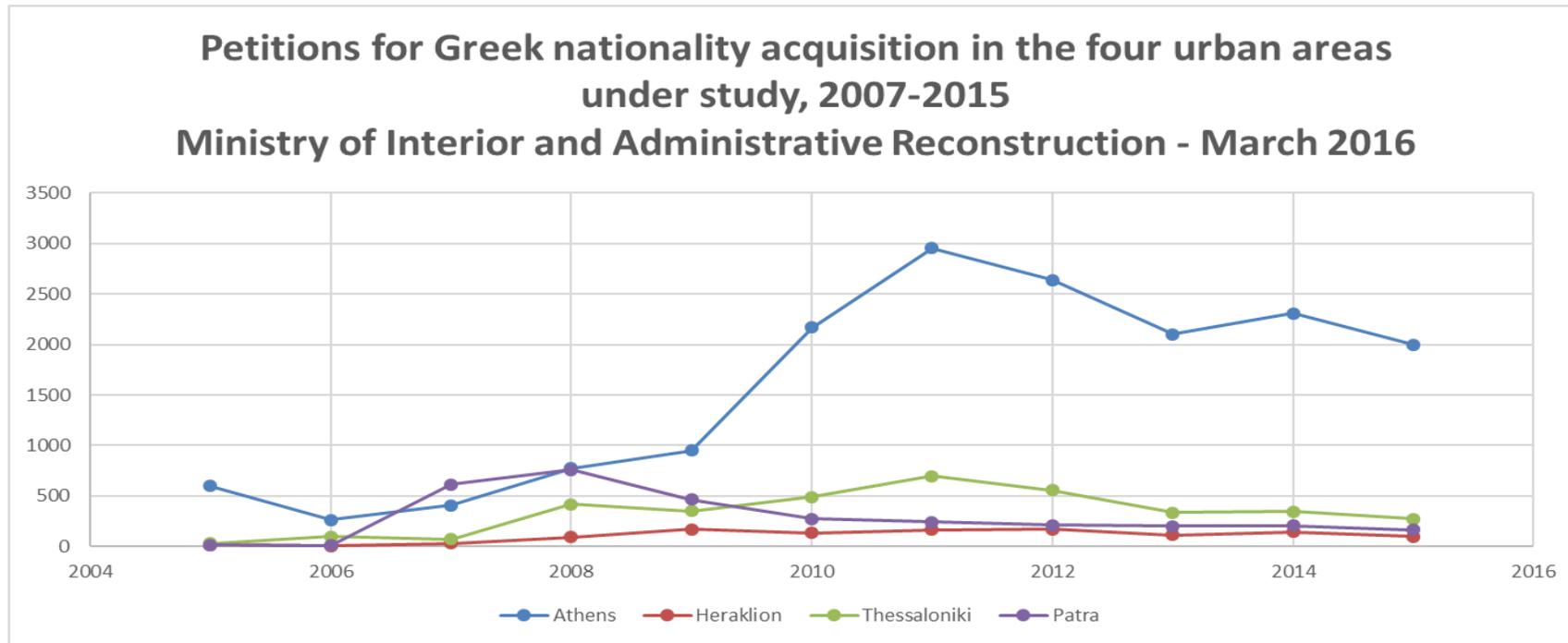
**Figure 1: Total number of Legal Immigrants at the 4 Municipalities**



**Figure 2: Total Number of Immigrants per gender**

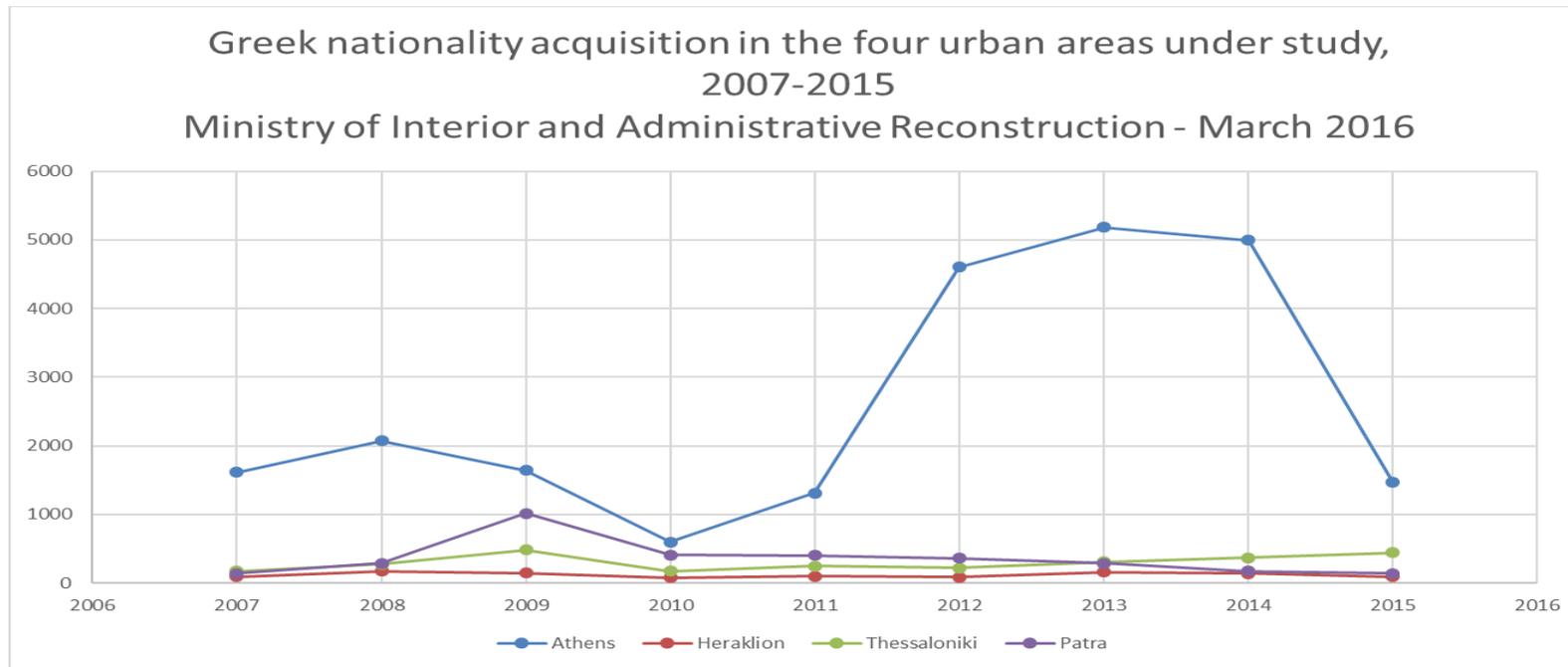


**Figure 3: Petitions for Greek nationality acquisition in the four urban areas under study, 2007-2015**



	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Athens	601	262	411	774	949	2167	2952	2639	2103	2306	1996
Heraklion	14	7	31	94	171	135	166	169	112	143	101
Thessaloniki	34	98	74	421	350	491	700	558	337	347	272
Patra	16	10	617	761	464	276	244	210	204	206	168

**Figure 4: Greek nationality acquisition in the four urban areas under study, 2007-2015**



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Athens</b>	<b>1614</b>	<b>2071</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>4604</b>	<b>5181</b>	<b>4998</b>	<b>1467</b>
<b>Heraklion</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Thessaloniki</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Patra</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>1016</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>135</b>

Note: This data pertains to the entire urban areas, within which the four municipalities under study are situated. Data obtained from the Decentralized Regional Departments (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*)

## 5.1 Case study I: The Municipality of Athens

According to the 2011 census the Municipality of Athens has a population of 664,046 people. A 20% of the city's population are immigrants who are legal residents as Mayor George Kaminis said in the UN General Assembly in October 2013<sup>70</sup>. Table 3 shows that the vast majority of the 77,806 TCNs who were issued with a residence permit in 2015-2016 in the Municipality of Athens (data of March 2016) are nationals of Albania (38,469), followed in much smaller number by nationals of the Philippines, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Egypt, Georgia, Pakistan, Moldova, Syria, China, Nigeria, Russia, India, Ethiopia, and a large number of other nationalities (see also Figure 5). The same nationalities are also shown to predominate in the municipality of Athens if we take into account data from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction showing the number of legal migrants holding at least one residence permit (Table 4). In terms of their age, the majority of migrants in Athens are from 25 until 50 years old, while there is a significant age cohort among the younger ages between 0 and 14 years old – children who were either born in Greece or who came in the country at a very early age (Figure 6).

Figure 7 shows an interesting pattern of the number of residence permits over time, which must be interpreted. It shows a decline of residence permits issued since 2010, which coincides with the onset of the economic crisis. There is no doubt that part of the decline reflects the fact that a significant number of migrants left the country as employment opportunities drastically dropped. At the same time though, part of the decline in the number of residence permits must also be due to a) larger numbers of TCNs receiving permits of longer duration (five- and ten-year permits), b) growing number of second generation migrants acquiring Greek nationality, and c) an increasing number of formerly undocumented migrants who have over the past few years legalized their status for exceptional reasons (*ekseretikous logous*, especially with Law 4332/2015 that expanded the pool of migrants that are eligible for legal status on this basis) or on the basis of subsidiary protection. As an official from the Attika Decentralized Administration confirmed, the number of legal migrants over the size of undocumented migrants has in the past couple of years constantly increased (without taking into account the mass influx of refugees in 2015-2016).<sup>71</sup> This is an interesting and significant development: if length of stay and security of residence are indispensable preconditions for individuals and families to develop a sense of belonging and to engage in and participate in the public life of the host country, then the ground for promoting integration in Athens (and possibly in Greece as a whole) has become more fertile.

Table 4 and Table 5 show the different categories of reasons for which residence permits were issued to TCNs in the greater urban area of Athens. More than one third were issued on grounds of family unification, 15069 for employment reasons, and about half (73,277) for other reasons, which are further broken down into the following subcategories (Table 5): the vast majority of those in the “other” category have 10-year permits, permits of indefinite duration, and second generation

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<sup>70</sup>Speech of Giorgos Kaminis, Mayor of the City of Athens, Greece in the Un General Assembly High-Level Dialogue (Hld) Side Event On Local Government entitled “Taking the Migration and Development Agenda Forward”, 4 October 2013, available at: [https://www.unitar.org/dcp/sites/unitar.org.dcp/files/Athens\\_HLD\\_Speech\\_0.pdf](https://www.unitar.org/dcp/sites/unitar.org.dcp/files/Athens_HLD_Speech_0.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Telephone communication of Dia Anagnostou with official from the Attika Decentralized Administration Department, Athens, 3 September 2016.

permits, confirming the earlier observation we made that the vast majority of TCNs in Athens and in the great urban area are permanently settled here and/or have the intention to do so.

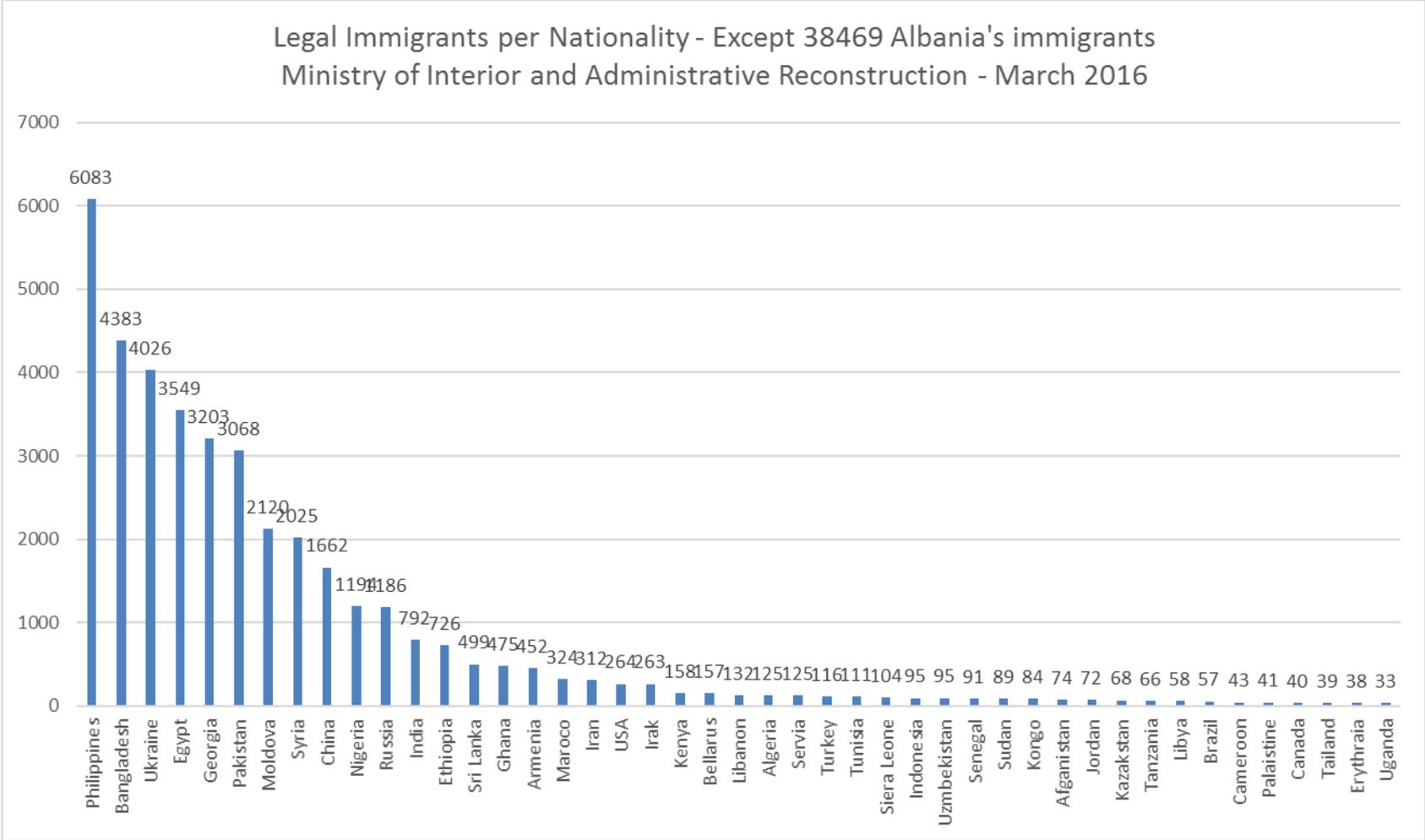
Athens also has had an additional characteristic which renders the integration of immigrants particularly challenging. The inner-city neighborhoods are the stronghold of Greece's neo-nazi party Golden Dawn and the violent actions of several of its members in some neighborhoods of the Municipality. The aggression of the Golden Dawn have been especially directed against immigrants with regular attacks and pogroms against the most vulnerable among them. While municipal authorities prior to 2010 implemented various actions and programs targeting immigrants, since 2010, the integration of immigrants at the local level has been an explicit priority under the leadership of Mayor Kaminis in line with Law 3850/2010 (Art. 78).

**Table 3: Number of residence permits issued to TCNs in the Municipality of Athens, March 2016**

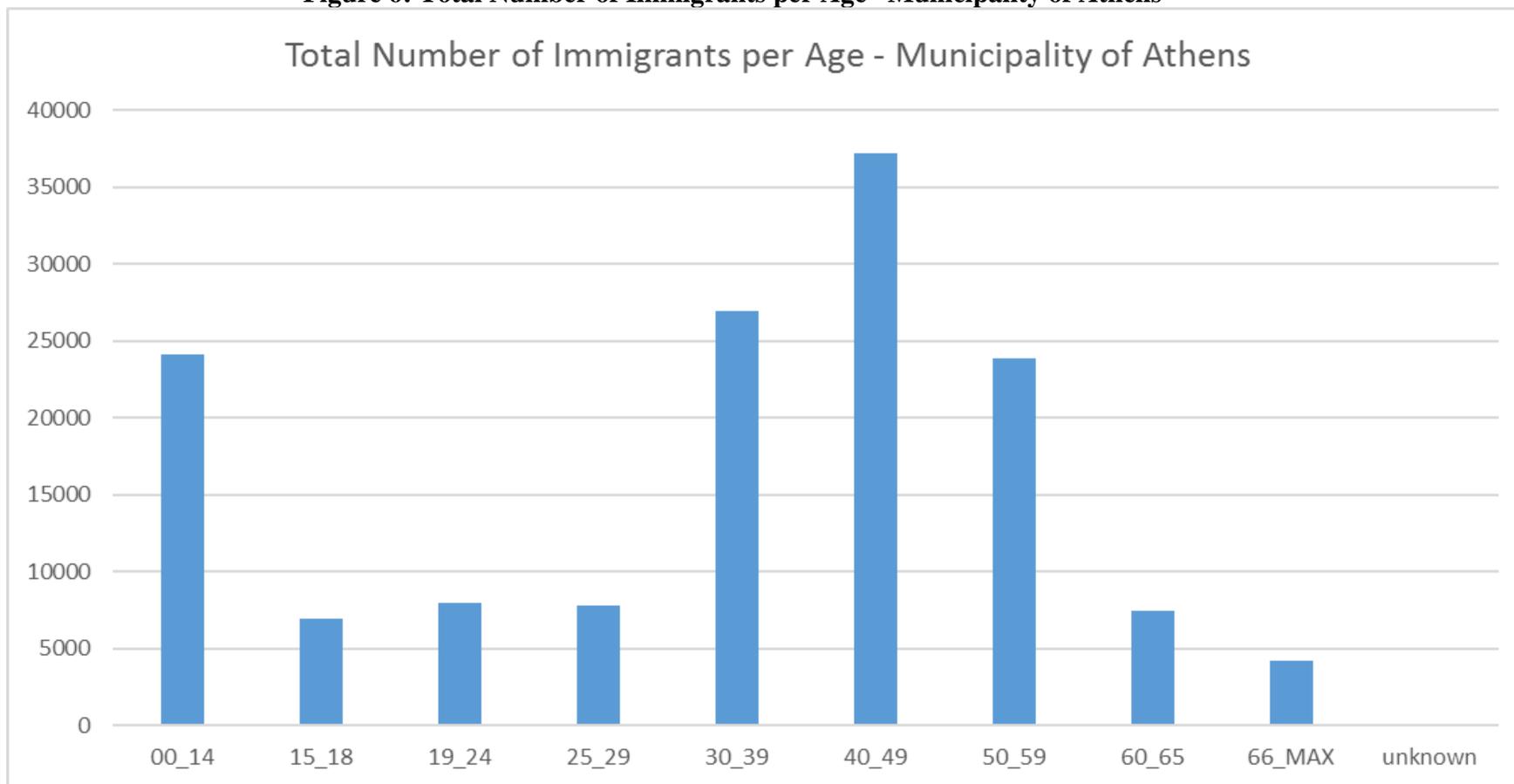
Nationality	Total
ALBANIA	38469
PHILIPPINES	6083
BANGLADESH	4383
UKRAINE	4026
EGYPT	3549
GEORGIA	3203
PAKISTAN	3068
MOLDOVA	2120
SYRIAN	2025
CHINA	1662
NIGERIA	1194
RUSSIA	1186
INDIA	792
ETHIOPIA	726
SRI LANKA	499
GHANA	475
ARMENIA	452
MOROCCO	324
IRAN	312
Others	3258
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77806</b>

Source: Attika Decentralized Regional Department (Apokentromeni Dioikisi Attikis)

**Figure 5: Legal Immigrants per Nationality –except 38469 Albania’s immigrants**



**Figure 6: Total Number of Immigrants per Age –Municipality of Athens**



*Source: Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016*

**Table 4: Categories of reasons for which residence permits were issued in the greater urban area of Athens, April 2016**

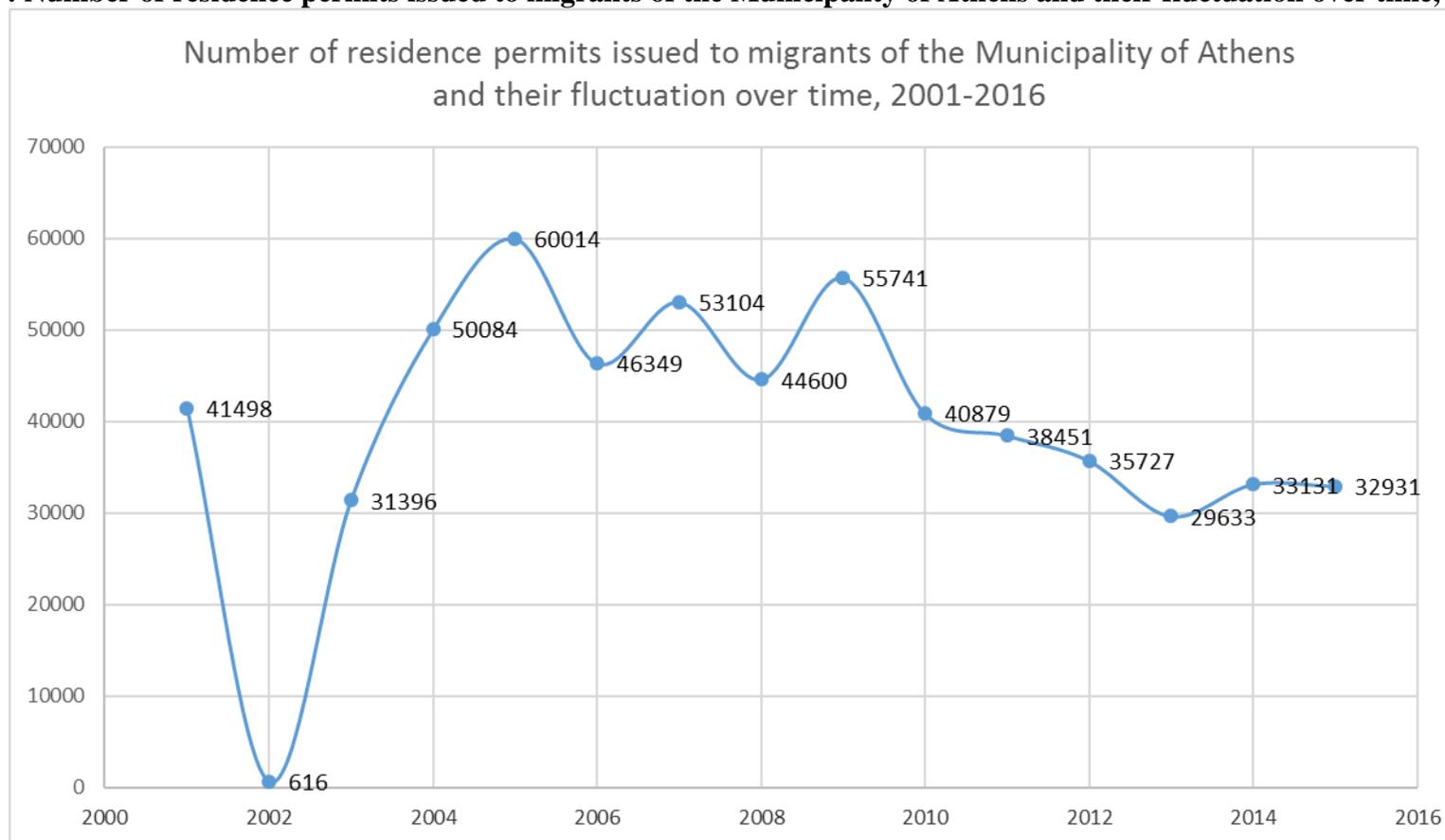
	Employment	Other	Family unification	Study	Grand Total
Athens	15069	73277	57735	457	146538

**Table 5: Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”**

Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”	Athens
TEN- YEAR RESIDENCE PERMIT	42253
SECOND GENERATION RESIDENCE PERMIT	8469
INDEFINITE -TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT	10338
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF LEGAL RESIDENCE	3478
LONG-TERM RESIDENT PERMIT	4444
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	2309
<b>TOTAL CORE SUBCATEGORIES</b>	<b>71291</b>
OTHER CATEGORIES	1986
<b>TOTAL CATEGORY "OTHER"</b>	<b>73277</b>

*Source: Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.*

**Figure 7: Number of residence permits issued to migrants of the Municipality of Athens and their fluctuation over time, 2001-2016**



Source: Data obtained from the Decentralized Administrative Departments (*Apokentromenes dioikiseis*).

## 5.1.1 The Legal-Political Domain

### 5.1.1.1 Political participation and civic engagement

In order to promote the integration of immigrants, the Athens Municipality established its Migrant Integration Council in 2011.<sup>72</sup> It had eleven principal members (six of which were immigrants and at least three elected members of the Municipal Council), and eleven alternate members (seven of which were immigrants and at least three elected members of the Municipality Council).<sup>73</sup> According to its internal statute, no member of the Athenian MIC would receive any salary or honorarium. The term of the Athens MIC members has a duration of two years and is ended when new members are appointed. The term can also be interrupted when the performance of members is in breach either with the execution of their duties or with the implementation of their project. Additionally, if a member is absent from three meetings of the MIC, the Municipal Council must replace it. Decisions are taken by open vote, and separately for every issue on the agenda.<sup>74</sup> In its first meeting on 31 May 2011, the Athens City Councilor Maria Kouveli and president of the newly established MIC at the time stated that “the municipal authority’s aim is to be actively involved in the day-to-day lives of migrants who reside permanently in the municipality, as well as the integration of migrants with the functions of society”.<sup>75</sup>

The first MIC established in 2011 and its internal regulation was only voted by the political group of Mayor George Kaminis (‘Dikaioma stin Poli’, independent) and the main opposition leader Nikitas Kaklamanis (‘Athina hi Poli tis Zois mas’, supported by the right party of New Democracy). ‘Laiki Sispirossi’ (supported by the Communist party KKE) voted in favour of the formation of the new council, ‘Anoikti Poli’ (supported by the left party of SYRIZA) gave a blank vote and ‘ANTARSIA’ (supported by the left wing party) voted against. These three parties voted against the internal regulation of the MIC expressing their opposition to the process of appointing

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<sup>72</sup> Evropaiko Instituto Koinonikis Economias, ‘Ta Simvoulia Entaksis Metanaston: Erevna Apitimisis tis Leitourgias tous kai Diagnosi ton Anagkon tous’, available at: [http://www.sem-ete.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/%CE%91.%CE%91\\_9\\_%CE%A0%CE%951\\_%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%95%CE%A5%CE%9D%CE%91-teliko\\_%CE%95%CE%A4%CE%95\\_1.2.%CE%91.pdf](http://www.sem-ete.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/%CE%91.%CE%91_9_%CE%A0%CE%951_%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%95%CE%A5%CE%9D%CE%91-teliko_%CE%95%CE%A4%CE%95_1.2.%CE%91.pdf) [accessed August 2016].

<sup>73</sup> Maria Kouveli (‘Dikaioma stin Poli’) became the President of the Athenian MIC and principal members were Eleftherios Skiadas (‘Athina hi Poli tis Zois mas’), Nikos Sofianos (‘Laiki Sispirossi’), Achmet Moavia (Greek Forum for Migrants), Flutura Tafilakou (Federation of Albanian Communities in Greece), Jo Valencia (Union of Filipino Immigrants), Yunus Mochamadi (Association of Legal Afghani Immigrants and Refugees), Katerina Koutsirkou (Community of Ukrainians in Greece), Maria Ohilempo (Organisation of Women from Nigeria), Dimitris Christopoulos (Greek Union for Human Rights) and Nikodimos Kinoua-Maina (ASANTE). The alternate members were George Amiras (‘Epimenoume Athina’) Maria Kanellopoulou (‘Anoikti Poli’), Petros Constantinou (‘ANTARSIA’) Iosif Samouil (Union of Egyptian Employees), Mounir Sinto (Cultural Association of Bangladesh), Farouk Hussein, Petronella Kotsopoulou (Greek-Moldavian Friendship Association), Loretta Macolei (United Women from Arica), Elias Ali Hasan (Union of Somalis in Greece), Tzanetos Antipas (PRAKSIS) and Kalliopi Likovardi (Greek Association for Human Rights).

<sup>74</sup> Esoterikos Kanonismos Leitourgias tou Simvouliou Entaksis Metanaston tou Dimou Athinaion, May 2013, available at: [http://elearning.sem-ete.gr/pluginfile.php/57/block\\_html/content/eswterikos\\_kanonismos.pdf](http://elearning.sem-ete.gr/pluginfile.php/57/block_html/content/eswterikos_kanonismos.pdf) [accessed August 2016].

<sup>75</sup> Municipality of Athens website, ‘31-05-2011: City of Athens Migrant Integration Council’, 31 May 2011, available at: <http://www.cityofathens.gr/en/node/13346> [accessed July 2016-].

its members, and supporting instead their election. Members of the municipal council elected with the Golden Dawn were absent from the procedure.

Convening at least once per month even if no issues have been formally placed on the agenda, the Athens MIC was the first local government body with a specific mission to promote the participation and representation of the migrant communities. The initial purpose of the Athens MIC was to set up the rules for the election of the representatives of immigrants in local elections, in which in 2010 they were granted the right to vote. In particular, the MIC sought to proceed from the appointment of those representatives to their election by establishing a civil register for all migrants holding a legal residence of permit.<sup>76</sup> Gradually a higher number of communities started to show interest and participate, reaching the number of twenty-three.

The criteria on the basis of which the City Council invites organizations and communities to participate in the MIC are based upon the size of the population of immigrant communities and the representation of communities from different geographical areas. Furthermore, a minimum participation of women and youth was required. Another requirement is that the migrant communities that participate in the MIC are organized, that is, they must have already been recognized by the Court of the First Instance in the form of either a non-profit organizations or an association.

The mission of the MIC is to document and examine the problems facing migrants who live permanently in the municipality regarding their integration in local society and their contact with municipal services and the municipal authority. Additionally, it can submit proposals to the Athens City Council for the development of local actions to promote the smooth social integration of migrants as well as to organize events in cooperation with the Municipality. Besides providing consultation to the City Council, the MIC aims to raise public awareness and promote social cohesion in the local community. It is also responsible for the organization of an annual festival dedicated to immigrants, the Immigration Day. The revenues of the Athens MIC derive from the budget of the Municipality of Athens, along with donations and sponsorships as well as by its participation in European Research Programs.<sup>77</sup> At the beginning of 2013, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Nils Muižnieks visited Athens and considered the Athenian MIC a “successful structure”.<sup>78</sup>

The reference policy document of the Municipality’s integrationist approach is the National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals of the Ministry of the Interior. This official document defines “structural integration” as the main strategy of the Greek state towards “legal” immigrants. The term “structural integration” means the “full acceptance of the political and cultural principles of reference of the host country’ by immigrants”. It takes distance from multiculturalism, which is seen to segment society through the compulsory preservation of immigrants’ ethnic identities. It also takes distance from what it terms as “simple integration”,

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<sup>76</sup> Apostolos Linardis, ‘Simvoulia Entaksis Metanaston: Enas Neos Thesmos Entaksis ton Metanaston stis Topikes Koinonies’, EKKE paper, June 2011, available at: [http://www.ekke.gr/projects/sem/resources/parousiaseis/SEM\\_Linardis.pdf](http://www.ekke.gr/projects/sem/resources/parousiaseis/SEM_Linardis.pdf) [accessed July 2016].

<sup>77</sup> See Article 5 of in the Internal Statute, Ibid (available at: [ete.gr/pluginfile.php/57/block\\_html/content/eswterikos\\_kanonismos.pdf](http://ete.gr/pluginfile.php/57/block_html/content/eswterikos_kanonismos.pdf)).

<sup>78</sup> Nils Muižnieks, Report following his visit to Greece, from 28 January to 1 February 2013, 16 April 2013, available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=2053611&direct=true> [accessed July 2016].

which focuses on the economic and political integration and does not require the disclaimer of previous cultural and ethnic identity.<sup>79</sup>

However, the room for the Municipality of Athens to play a catalytic role in migration affairs is limited, arguably due to poor resources and the limited number of competencies. According to current President of the MIC Lefteris Papagiannakis, the Municipality is no longer responsible even for residence permits which are granted at the central level. Its contribution is principally related to bureaucratic procedures. The Municipality, for instance, seeks to give the opportunity for foreign citizens to be hired in Athens Citizen's Service Centres (CSC).<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, several migrant communities such as the Federation of Albanian Communities in Greece, the Association of Legal Afghani Immigrants and Refugees, the Community of Ukrainians in Greece, the Organization of Women from Nigeria, the Greek-Moldavian Friendship Association etc. have become active. They have participated not only the MIC meetings expressing their views but also in public conferences organized by the Municipality. On 18 December 2014, for instance, the Athenian MIC organized a debate on 'Changing our City and Neighborhood'. Several representatives of migrant communities had then the opportunity to openly exchange views with Greek officials.<sup>81</sup>

## 5.1.2 The Social-Economic Domain

### 5.1.2.1 Social Services

The City of Athens provides an extensive network of social services, which expanded since 2010 when the economic crisis set in. A basic structure in this social service network is the City of Athens Homeless Shelter that was established in 1999 as a legal entity of public law. In early 2005, it was renamed "Centre for Reception and Solidarity of the City of Athens (*KYADA*)" and entered into independent operation with its own infrastructure, services and budget. The aim of *KYADA*, according to its website, is "to tackle problems faced by humans who, for whatever reason, are without shelter or whose home is unsafe and inadequate." It also "seeks to develop mechanisms to prevent such phenomena and monitor cases of homeless individuals so as to ensure their eventual rehabilitation and social reintegration".<sup>82</sup> In this respect, *KYADA* collects and distributes food items, clothing, and shoes to anyone who visits

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<sup>79</sup> Thomas Maloutas, Nicos Souliotis, Georgia Alexandri, George Kandylis, Michalis Petrou, 'Governance arrangements and initiatives in Athens, Greece', *Diversity Project Report*, 24 August 2014, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Interview of Lefteris Papagiannakis, 21 January 2015, available at: <https://joininism.wordpress.com/2015/01/21/%CF%83%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BE%CE%B7-%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%AD%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%AC%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%80/> [last accessed 25 September 2016]

<sup>81</sup> "Dimos Athinaion: Allazoume tin Poli kai ti Geitonia mas", 18 December 2014. Available at <http://www.aftodioikisi.gr/ota/dimoi/dimos-athinaion-imerida-me-thema-allazoume-tin-poli-kai-ti-geitonia-mas/> [accessed 30 August 2016].

<sup>82</sup> 'City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*)'. Available at: <https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/node/7511>.

or is hosted at the shelter, as well as families and individuals located by its staff, other social services, parishes, volunteers and collaborating agencies.

*KYADA* distributes 1,200-1,400 meals daily to destitute and homeless Greeks and foreign nationals at the Centre's meal provision facilities. Moreover, since 2008, *KYADA* operates the "Social Pharmacy" program, which provides drugs and other pharmaceutical items to uninsured citizens of the Municipality of Athens. Additionally, since 2009, the "Athens Market" program enables its beneficiaries to receive new or slightly used clothes for free. *KYADA* also operates two hostels where 180 adults are offered short-term accommodation (3-6 months). Furthermore, through its social services *KYADA* offers counselling, psychological support, social rehabilitation and reintegration to its beneficiaries.

The "Social Grocery Store (*Koinoniko Pandopoleio*)" was established in 2007 in Athens, as a result of the cooperation between the Municipality of Athens and a Supermarket company. Two times a week and in specific working hours, the Supermarket company makes available to *Koinoniko Pandopoleio* the required products and manpower for its operation. Every six months, 200 low-income families benefit from the services of *Koinoniko Pandopoleio*. These families are chosen by *KYADA* through lottery, based on a set of socioeconomic criteria defined by the Municipality's Social Services. Then, they are provided with €100-€350 vouchers on a monthly basis depending on their socioeconomic status, which can be used for a period of six months within the premises of *Koinoniko Pandopoleio*.<sup>83</sup>

The "Solidarity to the Family" social program was first implemented in May 2012 in an attempt to combat poverty and social exclusion. *KYADA* in cooperation with the private sector supports 200 families every year (100 families every six-months) through the provision of food items, cleaning and personal hygiene products based on their needs. Moreover, all families can make use of the social and medical services of *KYADA*. The "Mutual Citizen Aid Hub" social program was first implemented in July 2012 in an attempt to provide material support to vulnerable social groups. The program is implemented by *KYADA*. All distributed items are provided by the private sector and individual donations. The "Hub" has about 9,000 beneficiaries. Those who are not chosen to enjoy the services of *Koinoniko Pandopoleio* are automatically entitled to 1 bag of goods per month, or 2 bags of goods per month in case of large families, which are provided by the "Hub" (*Komvos Allilovoitheias*). Finally, the "Voucher" program enables its beneficiaries to buy anything but tobacco and alcohol products. All citizens of the Municipality of Athens who are unemployed and live below the minimum level of income are eligible to participate in the "Voucher" program.

The philosophy of the Municipality of Athens is that all citizens of the City of Athens have equal rights and opportunities to access those programs.<sup>84</sup> In this respect then, there are no discriminations, as the Municipality of Athens is obliged to provide for its citizens based on their needs.<sup>85</sup> By extension, there are no specially designed programs for migrants/refugees available at *KYADA*. Undocumented migrants also benefit from the *KYADA* daily meals distribution, and make use of the Municipal

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<sup>83</sup> Koinoniko Pandopoleio [In Greek]. Available at: <http://www.koinonikopantopoleio.gr/koinoniko-pantopoleio.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Interview, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>85</sup> Interview, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

health services for free.<sup>86</sup> However, despite the fact that Municipal health services are available to all citizens of the City of Athens, the Municipality is unable to provide undocumented migrants the same services as legal migrants.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, undocumented migrants cannot be hosted in Municipal hostels,<sup>88</sup> as various medical and psychiatric examinations, together with a criminal record check, are a prerequisite in order to ensure the safety of all hosted beneficiaries.<sup>89</sup> As a rule of thumb, however, anybody who fulfils the essential prerequisites faces no discrimination and is eligible to participate in the Municipality's social programs.<sup>90</sup>

Specifically with regard to the "Voucher" program described above, it was stated that only migrants who legally reside in Greece are eligible to participate.<sup>91</sup> In this respect, many migrants benefit from the "Voucher" program, predominantly Albanians.<sup>92</sup> In the same manner, undocumented migrants are also excluded from the "Hub" social program.<sup>93</sup> However, ad hoc assistance has been provided to undocumented migrants who have visited the facilities of the "Hub" in a number of occasions, such as in summer 2015, during the period of increased migration flows to Greece.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, when the "Hub" program was first implemented in 2012, 65% of its beneficiaries were migrants and only 35% were Greeks. Nowadays, it's the other way around, as a large number of Albanian migrants have left Greece due to the economic crisis.<sup>95</sup> The *Koinoniko Pandopoleio*, "Solidarity to the Family", and Municipal hostels social programs have stricter eligibility criteria, which by definition can be fulfilled only by migrants who legally reside in the country. Finally, meals and clothes distribution, and social, medical and other health services are the most accessible programs to migrants, irrespective of their legal status.

While in principle legal migrants are beneficiaries of the municipality's social services on equal terms with Greeks, there are a number of barriers that our interviews from the municipality acknowledge. Lack of knowledge of Greek language (or more frequently inadequate knowledge of it) is a basic barrier that the municipality should effectively confront in order to facilitate access in practice. A related barrier to migrants in accessing the social services is that the relevant information does not reach many migrants. Information about the social services is not regularly translated into languages other than Greek. The Municipality is planning to translate the information sheet regarding the available social programs<sup>96</sup> to more languages in order to increase its reach.<sup>97</sup> In addition, there are plans to produce a "survival in the streets of Athens" guide, which will be translated in 5 languages (Arabic and Farsi included).<sup>98</sup> According to one of the interviewees, there is definitely room for improvement with respect to the capacity of the Municipality to disseminate

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<sup>86</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>87</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>88</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>89</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>90</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>91</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>92</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>93</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>94</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>95</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>96</sup> The information sheet is distributed to migrant communities and provides information with respect to ongoing social programs.

<sup>97</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>98</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (KYADA), Athens, 15/02/2016.

information to migrants.<sup>99</sup> In this respect, it was suggested that the Migrant Integration Council (MIC) can potentially fill this dissemination void.<sup>100</sup>

Despite the Municipality's considerable efforts to increase its reach to migrant communities, the dissemination of information is limited and fragmented. Emails containing information regarding social programs are sent to key members of migrant communities, and relevant posters are placed in public spaces, such as public schools and gyms, cultural centres, etc.<sup>101</sup> Hence, already integrated migrants, who tend to be present in public spaces, have much higher chances to receive such information compared to those who have not been integrated yet, and are much more in need of such information and services. In the same manner, older migrant communities, such as the Albanian and Bulgarian, tend to be more active and well-connected compared to newer ones, which certainly increases their access to information and relevant social programs.<sup>102</sup> By extension, these issues result in asymmetric access to information and social services among migrant communities.

Another crucial obstacle in migrants' access to Municipal social programs is the lack of interpreters, and cultural mediators.<sup>103</sup> In the summer of 2015 the Municipality had employed cultural mediators in order to bridge the gap between migrant communities and Municipal health services.<sup>104</sup> Yet, despite its undisputable success, the initiative was soon abandoned due to the lack of funding.<sup>105</sup> Such mediators could contribute to easing cultural and religious differences, for example, the fact that female Muslim migrants quite often refrain from visiting the Municipality's health clinics.<sup>106</sup> Currently, municipal social service providers like the *KYADA* have no cultural mediators. Yet, it was stated that this problem might be solved soon, since an agreement between the Municipality and MetAction NGO<sup>107</sup>, which will make available to the former cultural mediators, is pending approval.<sup>108</sup> Finally, the Municipality is also planning to create an electronic database, which will include all social services and respective actors (Municipal agencies and NGOs), in order to improve the quality of provided information.

According to some migrants, another much less tangible, yet significant, obstacle to migrants' access to Municipal social services is discrimination.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, such incidents have been recorded within the Municipal police, which in some cases has refused to provide migrant shopkeepers with the necessary health license for the operation of their shops, despite the fact that they had significantly improved their businesses after inspection.<sup>110</sup> Elected representatives of the Athens City Council state that the main aim of the Municipality is to eliminate discrimination, and to this end, it has run cultural awareness seminars for its employees.<sup>111</sup> Finally, the lack of legal

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<sup>99</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>100</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>101</sup> Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> Municipal District, Athens, 13/04/2016.

<sup>102</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>103</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>104</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>105</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>106</sup> Interview, ASANTE NGO, Athens, 09/02/2016.

<sup>107</sup> MetAction is specialised in the training and certification of interpreters/cultural mediators.

<sup>108</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>109</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>110</sup> Interview, ASANTE NGO, Athens, 09/02/2016.

<sup>111</sup> Interview, Social Policy and Health Directorate, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

documents constitutes another serious obstacle in undocumented migrants’ access to Municipal social services. Despite the fact that undocumented migrants are treated for free in the Municipality’s health clinics, a large number of them still refrains from visiting public services in fear of being apprehended.<sup>112</sup> This issue brings to the fore once again the communication void between Municipal social services and migrant communities.

*KYADA* collects data regarding the number of people who benefit from its social programs. In this regard, all migrants who benefit on a regular basis from *KYADA* services are recorded.<sup>113</sup> In general terms, *KYADA* provides support to 25,000 people, or in other words, 9,000 families and vulnerable individuals.<sup>114</sup> Currently, 4,100 families benefit from the “Voucher” program.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, there are 22,363 registered beneficiaries in the “Hub” program. Moreover, since its operation, 11,467 low-income families have benefited from the *Koinoniko Pandopoleio* program, that is more than 38,708 individuals facing serious economic problems.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, since 2014, 160 individuals have been hosted in the Municipal short-term accommodation hostels. Regarding the Municipality’s health clinics, only in 2015, 49,297 visits were recorded, a large number of which concerned foreign patients.

Finally, in 2016, 30 women were hosted in the Municipality’s hostels for female victims of domestic violence and their children, out of which 11 were third country nationals. The majority of them were from Iran (3 beneficiaries). In 2015, the number of hosted third country female victims of domestic violence in the hostels was double, while the majority was from Albania (6 beneficiaries) (see Table 6). In 2014, 16 women in total were hosted in the Municipality’s hostels for female victims of domestic violence and their children, out of which 10 were third country nationals, while the majority was from Albania (7 beneficiaries). Moreover, with specific regard to the Municipal short-term accommodation hostels, since 2014, 71 out of 160 beneficiaries in total have been third country nationals. In addition, regarding the beneficiaries of the “Hub” program, the top three nationalities since its operation include Albanians (8,975 beneficiaries), Greeks (8,643 beneficiaries) and Egyptians (866 beneficiaries) (See Table 7). Finally, with specific regard to the 9 Municipal health clinics, only in 2015, approximately 8,000 visits of foreign nationals were recorded, more than half of which concerned visits of Albanian or Albanian-Greek citizens (4,671 visits) (See Table 8).

**Table 6: Nationality and number of hosted beneficiaries in the Municipality’s hostels for female victims of domestic violence and their children, 2014-2016**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Greek	6	8	5
Third country nationals	10	22	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>

*Source: Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies, Municipality of Athens*

<sup>112</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>113</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>114</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>115</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

<sup>116</sup> Interview, City of Athens Homeless Shelter (*KYADA*), Athens, 15/02/2016.

**Table 7: Number and country of nationality of beneficiaries of the "Hub" program since its operation**

Country of nationality	Number of beneficiaries
Albania	8,975
Greece	8,643
Egypt	866
Romania	705
Nigeria	666
Bulgaria	344
Georgia	267
Poland	256
Syria	165
Other	13,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,363</b>

Source: Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies, Municipality of Athens

**Table 8: Nationality and number of visits of beneficiaries to the 9 Municipal health clinics, 2015**

Nationality	Number of visits
Greek	41,477
Albanian	4,176
Bulgarian	596
Albanian-Greek	495
Ukrainian	274
Armenian	215
Polish	211
Egyptian	199
Russian	130
Romanian	124
Other	1,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,297</b>

Source: Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies, Municipality of Athens

### 5.1.2.2 Employment

The Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA, having the Greek acronym 'EATA' as *Etaireia Anaptiksis kai Touristikis Provolis Athinon*) supports the Municipality's operational capacity with its expertise and dedicated human resources, giving impetus to the development potential of the city of Athens. In particular, the current volatility of the economic environment has been the driving force in bringing to the forefront the city's productive forces. An initiative is currently underway in order to reverse the country capital's negative publicity by highlighting its positive attributes. In this context, ADDMA plays an important role by designing and implementing an integrated action plan aiming to ensure social cohesion and improve the quality of life of city residents.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Website of 'Etaireia Anaptiksis kai Touristikis Provolis Athinon', available at: <http://www.developathens.gr/el/the-agency/profile> [accessed July 2016].

As part of the European strategy Europe 2020, the city of Athens is aiming at smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, by making good use of its comparative advantages and dealing with the challenges that have been recently exacerbated due to critical socio-economic conditions. Integrated strategic planning and its successful implementation along with effective utilization of all European financial instruments and policy tools constitutes the most crucial challenge that the city is faced with for the current decade. ADDMA has responded successfully to this challenge and is rapidly progressing in achieving its objectives. With this new mission, ADDMA has designed a comprehensive a 10-year Development Program with specific goals and measures. The key priorities and objectives, improving Athenians' quality of life, promoting urban regeneration, Managing the social crisis and providing technical Assistance.

Seeking to increase employment opportunities ADDMA participated in the TOPSA project (Local Integrated Programs Boosting Employment) directly serving 37.000 job seekers from 2012 until 2015. The program aimed at providing assistance to the population of the Municipality in general without making specific reference to refugees or vulnerable groups. ADDMA also participated in TOPEKO project (Local Actions for Integrating Socially Vulnerable Groups) during the same period. As opposed to TOPSA, TOPEKO mainly aimed at offering assistance to vulnerable groups. Specifically, ADDMA participated in six development partnerships, funded by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Welfare, with the objective of developing an integrated support plan to prepare socially vulnerable groups to enter the labor market. Beneficiaries are 520 people living in the Municipality of Athens.<sup>118</sup>

The principal objective of ADDMA has been to contribute to the integration of 70-80 migrants per project. Sixty projects were approved following sixty applications made. Some success stories were recorded. A group of migrants, for instance, managed to establish a cleaning services company and benefited by receiving advice by representatives of the Municipality. The cooperation between ADDMA and migrants, as well as with NGOs such as ASANTE and MELISSA has been generally harmonious, and these NGOs were instrumental in disseminating relevant information to migrant communities. More importantly, the majority of migrants involved showed a will to participate and explore practical opportunities for their integration in day-to-day activities of the Municipality.<sup>119</sup>

At the same time, according to the interviewees who were involved in the implementation of both TOPSA and TOPEKO projects, the room for an absolute

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<sup>118</sup> These 6 development partnerships are: 'Co-working in the historic centre', with a total budget of € 380.000, to be concluded on 30/06/2014, 'Integration for All - PRE – ACTION' with a total budget of €450.000, to be concluded on 30/06/2014, 'Creation of Social Enterprises for the Vulnerable Groups in the City of Athens' - 'More colour in our lives - changing the City' with a total budget of €350.000 concluded on 30/06/2014, 'Developing Social Economy for the support and achieving an integrated inclusion of socially vulnerable groups in Attica' - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'CO-BUSINESS IN ATHENS' with a total budget of €276.000, concluded on 30/06/2014, 'Bridging the gap - Solidarity and support for women - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'DIEXODOS' – it involves an integrated intervention (including career, legal and psychological counselling) to support social reintegration, job search and work placement for 70 women who have experienced violence and abuse, with a total budget of € 380.000 and Forum for Equal Integration - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'ANTAIOS'. This project seeks to support 90 beneficiaries - third country nationals, who currently legally reside in Athens and are at risk of social exclusion. Total budget: €450.000.

<sup>119</sup> Interview, Athens Development and Destination Management Agency - ADDMA S.A., Athens, 30/3/2016.

success had been rather limited from the very first beginning. That is because the general framework of the planned actions was vague. As a result training courses, for instance, could not yield tangible results. Additionally, theoretical ideas proposed by migrants could not materialize in practice, not least because financing opportunities were limited. In that regard, an ADDMA representative said in an interview that the ‘Labor Ministry had initially promised but was in the end unable to provide 15,000 EUR for a start up in the context of TOPEKO program, and the participating immigrants were disillusioned.’<sup>120</sup> In a similar case, web radio station for migrants started to operate for a period of six months as a pilot project but could not secure funding to continue functioning. The language problems was another significant barrier as several immigrants could not be integrated for this reason. Some of them also turned their anger against employees of the Municipality calling them ‘racists’.

In sum, as it surfaces in other areas and sectors of the municipality, general policies and measures that are aimed at the population in general have limited reach among migrants. Barriers exist not only due to inadequate Greek language learning, but also due to limited familiarity with how to complete the required administrative procedures, as well as to sense of mistrust that these may reinforce. If general training and employment programs are to enhance their reach among and benefit non-Greeks, they must also take into account the specific circumstances of migrants and vulnerable groups.

### 5.1.2.3 Day Care

The Municipal Nursery of Athens was established in 1859 in an attempt to primarily provide accommodation and support to abandoned infants. In early 1980s the first Municipal nursery school was established, which operated under the auspices of Municipal Nursery of Athens. Currently, 77 Municipal nursery schools operate across the city under the management of the Municipal Nursery of Athens, where approximately 5,500 children are hosted on a daily basis.<sup>121</sup>

According to one of the interviewees, there is no special policy/approach with respect to the access of migrants’ children to day care facilities.<sup>122</sup> In this regard, all children of legal migrants are eligible to be admitted to the municipality’s day care system, given that there are places available. Hence, at least one of the child’s parents has to be a legal migrant in order for the child to be eligible for admission to day care. Children of undocumented migrants do not have access to day care facilities. Moreover, despite the fact that there are no socioeconomic admission criteria, all children coming from low-income<sup>123</sup> families are given priority. All in all, due to the fact that pre-school education is not compulsory in Greece, municipal day care facilities cannot ensure the admission of all eligible children.

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<sup>120</sup> Interview, Athens Development and Destination Management Agency - ADDMA S.A., Athens, 30/3/2016.

<sup>121</sup> See the website of the Municipal Nursery of Athens at <http://www.dbda.gr/index.php/dba/istoria> [last accessed on 20 October 2016].

<sup>122</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>123</sup> Children from families with less than 15,000 euros annual income are given admission priority. Children from families with less than 5,000 euros, or whose parents are unemployed or divorced are given absolute admission priority.

The overarching aim of the Athens Municipality is to transform day care facilities into reception and hosting spaces for native and migrant families that are available beyond their usual working hours.<sup>124</sup> This was initially attempted for a short period of time through the program “Together”, which was implemented from April to June 2015 in a number of Municipal day care facilities in Athens.<sup>125</sup> The aim of the program was to promote, on the one hand, the interaction between native and migrant children through activities, and on the other, the participation of their parents in multicultural events in day care facilities.<sup>126</sup> All in all, the program aimed in the creation of a meeting point for parents in day care facilities, the facilitation of children’s access to pre-school education, and, finally, the “harmonious coexistence between third country children and the host society”.<sup>127</sup>

The implementation of the program “Together” revealed that migrant families were in need of day care spaces that operate and are available in extended working hours, due to the increased workload and financial hardships of parents amid the economic crisis.<sup>128</sup> Additionally, the extended operation of day care facilities for a limited period of time, enabled the Municipality to develop intercultural activities<sup>129</sup> with the participation of native and migrant families.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, one of the interviewees suggested that such initiatives that were developed within the context the program “Together” promoted in the best possible way the integration of migrant populations, and, in this respect, more effort and funds need to be invested towards this direction.<sup>131</sup>

One of the main obstacles in migrants’ access to municipal day care services in the past had been the legal status requirement for both parents. This requirement rendered a large number of migrant children unable to access municipal day care services, as, due to the economic crisis, many migrants have not been able to reach the annual number of insurance credits, which is required for the renewal of residence permits. This requirement was eventually removed and it was substituted by the condition that only one of a child’s parents has to be a legal migrant.

All in all, however, the difficulties in migrants’ access to municipal day care services vary across the 77 nursery schools in Athens. Indeed, access to day care can be harder in some nursery schools, where the percentage of migrant children is

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<sup>124</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>125</sup> The program “Together” was implemented within the context of Project 1.4c/13 entitled “Promoting the interaction between migrant and native children through creative infant activities in existing day care facilities”. The project was funded by the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, and was implemented in 42 day care facilities in Athens, Heraklion, Ioannina, Neapoli-Sykees, and Nikaia-Ag. I. Rentis. In total, 2,050 native and migrant children benefited from the project.

<sup>126</sup> City of Athens website, available at: <https://www.cityofathens.gr/node/26226>.

<sup>127</sup> Data provided in written form by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA).

<sup>128</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016 and Interview, KASAPI- Hellas Unity of Filipino Migrants, Athens, 11/03/2016.

<sup>129</sup> Such activities included cooking and tasting multicultural specialties, exchanging toys, Greek language and computer courses to parents, workshops, and other socialization activities for both children and their parents.

<sup>130</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>131</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

90%.<sup>132</sup> In this regard, these specific nursery schools are staffed with people who are aware of and sensitive about the issue of integration of migrant children and their families.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, municipal nursery schools also include psychological support and counselling, health, and social support services, which can potentially facilitate the access and life of migrant children in day care facilities. Indeed, nursery schools staff already knows since children selection procedure which children and families encounter more serious socioeconomic hardships, and can direct them to the aforementioned services, if needed.<sup>134</sup> However, it should be noted that there is no special Municipal policy/approach targeted to migrants with respect to dealing with obstacles in access to municipal day care services.

During the 2014-2015 period, migrant children constituted 19.16% (1,267 children) of the total number of children (6,613 children) hosted in the 77 Municipal nursery schools in Athens. The vast majority of them were from Albania (715 children). The percentage of migrant children has remained, more or less, stable during the last years: 2013-2014 (18.06%); 2012-2013 (20.76%). However, it appears to have dropped considerably compared to the 2011-2012 period, when the percentage of migrant children hosted in Municipal nursery schools was 23.63% (see Table 9). This gradual decrease in the percentage of migrant children hosted in municipal day care facilities is directly related to the fact that a large number of the Albanians has left Greece since the beginning of the economic crisis. This is also confirmed by the sharp decrease in the number of Albanian children hosted in municipal day care facilities since 2011 (see Figure 8).

**Table 9: Number and Percentage of Greek and Migrant Children in Athens Day Care Facilities, 2011-2015**

<b>NATIONALITY</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
<b>GREEK</b>	5918	3883	4997	5346
<b>OTHER</b>	1831	1017	1101	1267
<b>SUM</b>	<b>7749</b>	<b>4900</b>	<b>6098</b>	<b>6613</b>
<b>GREEK %</b>	76.37	79.24	81.94	80.84
<b>OTHER %</b>	23.63	20.76	18.06	19.16

<sup>132</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>133</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

<sup>134</sup> Interview, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, Municipality of Athens, Athens, 17/02/2016.

**Figure 8: Number of Albanian Children in Athens Day Care Facilities, 2011-2015**



Source: Data from the Municipality of Athens, Municipal Nursery (*Dimotiko Vrefokomeio*)

#### **5.1.2.4 European Integration Fund – Actions in the Municipality of Athens**

During the period 2008-2015, five projects were operated in the Municipality of Athens that they were funded by the European Integration Fund. The "City of Athens IT Company" (DAEM SA) participated as a partner in several integration actions of the Fund. The IT Company (DAEM SA) is operated as a legitimate Municipal Corporation and it was established in 1983.<sup>135</sup> It is the oldest and most significant software company in the local level. In 2008, with the Law 3463/2006 (Municipalities and Communities Code), the company was transformed into a local government development company under the name "City of Athens IT Company" (DAEM SA). DAEM (SA) is focused on cooperation for the implementation of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) projects in the private and public sector, participation in European research and development programs and the promotion of its products and solutions to Municipalities within Greece and abroad.

The first project was implemented from January 2012 to July 2013 and it was entitled "the evolution of a cooperation network between representatives of Migrant Integration Councils and similar institutions of local government at the EU level and representatives of migrants' organizations at the European level". The project's priority was the exchange of experiences, good practices and information for migrants' integration among the European members<sup>136</sup>. It was implemented through

<sup>135</sup>City of Athens website, available at: <https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/node/7521>

<sup>136</sup> Data provided by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Municipality of Athens.

the formation of a collaboration network for migration and integration issues. The aim of the project was: a) to enhance the exchange of good practices, b) to encourage dissemination of knowledge, c) to strengthen planning and implementation of relevant policies, d) to encourage the potential development of joint actions and e) to gather information for integration of third country nationals. In this way, it was intended to promote the role of the local institutions and the institutions of civil society and the promotion of their work, to record innovative policies at the local level and to disseminate best practices in integration. The number of migrants who were involved in the project was 100 and the partners were the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), the educational and advisory Services (DIMENSION KEK) and Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development (EPEKSA).

From January to June 2015, another project<sup>137</sup> entitled "Facilitating the access to primary medical and social services, in large urban centers of the country" was implemented. The Priority was the implementation of actions pertaining to the Common Basic Principles for migrant integration policy in European Union, specifically the supply of information to third country nationals who reside legal in the country. The project was implemented in Municipal Clinics of four cities: Athens, Heraklion, Thessaloniki and Ioannina. Social workers, health visitors and intercultural mediators were hired in the four municipalities in the frame of this project. They implemented actions to promote information on health issues and prevention of diseases in the Municipal Clinics of each municipality, in communities and in associations of third country nationals. They managed to facilitate access to primary medical and social services, to inform third country nationals on the contagious diseases, treatment and access to medical and social services of municipalities and to strengthen the staff of primary medical and social services with health visitors, social workers and intercultural mediators. In total, 3114 migrants benefited from the project.

The project entitled<sup>138</sup> "Promoting the interaction between migrants and native children through creative infant activities in existing day care facilities" run from January 2015 to June 2016. The project was implemented in 42 day care facilities in Athens, Heraklion, Ioannina, Neapoli-Sykes, and Nikaia - Ag. Ioannis Rentis. The aim of the program was to promote the interaction between native and migrant children through activities, and the participation of their parents in multicultural events in day care facilities. It also sought to establish a meeting point for parents in day care facilities, as well as to facilitate children's access to pre-school education and the "harmonious coexistence between children who are TCNs and the host society". The partners of the program were the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), the Municipal Nursery of Athens, the Heraklion Development Agency, the public entity Organization of Social Protection, Solidarity and Pre-school education of the Municipality of Ioannina, the Department of Social Protection and Solidarity in the Municipality of Nikaia - Ag. Ioannis Rentis, the Public Benefit Corporation and Services of the Municipality of Neapoli-Sykes and the Society for the Development and Creative Occupation of Children (EADAP). In total, 2,050 native and migrant children benefited from the project.

The project "The evolution network between European Member States on inter-faith dialogue and the exercise of religious practices" was implemented from

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<sup>137</sup> Data provided by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Municipality of Athens.

<sup>138</sup> Data provided by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Municipality of Athens.

March to June 2015. Its priority was the "exchange of experience, good practices and information on integration issues among Member States."<sup>139</sup> The aim of the project was to create a network of participants, in order to exchange views and experiences on inter-faith dialogue and inter-religious practices both inside and outside the country. During the project, an online portal was created for the networking of the representatives of the organizations involved in the project. The program was attended by 16 representatives of institutions from the networking abroad (ten EU Member States) and representatives of organizations from the country (universities, immigrant associations, citizens, and interfaith organizations). The program sought to establish the groundwork for formulating policy proposals on interreligious dialogue and ways to promote the acceptance of different religious beliefs and practices. They were involved in the project as partners the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development (EPEKSA) and the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Church of Greece. The number of the participants was 250.

The project entitled "Skill development of the employees of the Municipality for the planning and the implementation of integration actions in the local community, and for the employees of the Decentralized Administrations to implement the integration strategies". The project was addressed to the employees of the Municipalities and the Decentralized Administrations and aimed to inform them about the existing European financial tools and to train them in the design and implementation of actions for the integration of migrants in the local communities.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, it provided analyses on migration issues, intercultural awareness and international institutional environment in the same issue. The partners of the program were the DAEM SA (Municipality of Athens), the Center of Development of Education Policy Centre - GSEE the ELKE (Special Fund for Research) of Panteion University, and the Department of Political Science and History. The number of the participants was 420.

It becomes evident from the above overview that the City of Athens, together with other municipalities, has been involved in a good number of projects funded by the European Integration Fund (EIF) in the period from 2008-2015, which implemented numerous actions to promote the integration of migrants. The EIF (now renamed AMIF, Asylum and Migration Integration Fund) is the only funding line available in Greece which is specifically geared to integration. Yet, the actions that are implemented and the lessons learned are not incorporated into a coherent and systematic integration strategy formulated by the municipality of Athens, or by the other municipalities involved. The result is the failure to exploit and take advantage of these financial instruments that are available in order to build a municipal integration strategy. Instead, their resources are channeled into a host of fragmented and stand-alone actions.

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<sup>139</sup> Data provided by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Municipality of Athens.

<sup>140</sup> Data provided by the City of Athens IT Company (DAEM SA), Municipality of Athens.

### 5.1.3 The Cultural-Religious Domain

Municipalities do not make cultural policy related to the presence of and they do not have the resources to do so. Yet, they are active in this domain through a variety of cultural actions, which are organized under the municipality's aegis or support. They can also influence inter-cultural and inter-faith relations by the position that they take in relation to national government policies and decisions regarding migrants' identity and culture. The Municipality of Athens has also acknowledged the linguistic diversity of migrant communities in the city by providing in the municipal radio station "9.84" news in the languages of the seven most populous migrant groups: Albanian, Russian, Polish, French, German, English, Romanian and recently in Arabic.

In recent years, Athens municipal authorities have organized or supported a number of events that promote cultural diversity, in an attempt to empower migrants, raise awareness regarding their rights, and facilitate the dialogue between native and migrant communities. In May 2015, for instance, the "Open Window" festival was co-organized by the Migrants Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens, and a number of migrant associations, such as Asante, Al Masar and the Albanian Association, among others. The aim of the festival, according to one of the co-organizers, was to provide the participants and visitors with a platform to become acquainted with different cultures, and to show that cultural differences can unite, rather than alienate, people.<sup>141</sup> In this regard, the 2-day festival included a number of events and activities, such as a photo exhibition, ethnic cuisine and bazaar. In the same manner, in June 2015, the "1<sup>st</sup> Multicultural Festival 'I Have a Dream': United Second Generation" was co-organized by civil society actors, such as ANASA Cultural Centre and Heinrich Böll Foundation, and Technopolis City of Athens, a corporation which operates under the auspices of the Municipality of Athens. The aim of the festival was to promote and safeguard second generation migrants' rights, and in this regard, it included talks, exhibitions, workshops, and theatre plays, among others.<sup>142</sup> Finally, on 21 February 2014, a 5-day festival took place in the premises of Technopolis City of Athens as a celebration of the International Mother Language Day. The festival, which was co-organised by METAction NGO and AKTO educational group with the support of the Municipality of Athens, included exhibitions and workshops that aimed to celebrate and promote cultural and language diversity.

The construction of a central mosque in the Municipality of Athens has been an issue of heated debate and strong opposition for many years now – at least since the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004. The issue has often surfaced in local election campaigns. All formal mosques that exist in Greece are found in Thrace, while a couple of mosques can be also found in the islands of Rhodes and Kos. For years, Muslims in Athens have been establishing 'cultural associations', a legal form that enables them to maintain a place of worship – a makeshift mosque – where they can

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<sup>141</sup> "Anoixto parathiro: Mia polipolitismiki giorti sto kentro Technon tou Dimou Athinaion" 31 May 2015. Available at: <http://www.aftodioikisi.gr/ota/dimoi/anoixto-parathiro-mia-polipolitismiki-giorti-sto-kentro-texnon-tou-dimou-athinaion/>.

<sup>142</sup> Elculture.gr website, "1o Polipolitismiko Festival: I Have A Dream : Enomeni Deyteri Genia,1-3 June 2015, available at: <http://www.elculture.gr/blog/1o-polipolitismiko-festival-i-have-a-dream-enomeni-defteri-genia/>.

practice their religion.<sup>143</sup> In 2011, about 100 informal mosques had been operating in the broader Athens area, yet, their total number is impossible to be accurately calculated.<sup>144</sup> These informal mosques remained unregulated for years. However, it should be noted at this point, that the policy of non-regularization of informal places of worship, not only mosques, ended in 2014 with Law 4301/2014. Since then, 3 previously informal mosques have been issued with a permit to operate as places of worship. Still, the majority of these places still avoid regularization without, however, consequences to their informal operation.

The issue of the construction of a formal mosque in Athens has been part of the political agenda causing heated debates since 2000. In 2006, the first relevant law was ratified by the Greek parliament. At the moment, the construction of the mosque is hindered by petitions for judicial review regarding urban planning issues, which are pending before the Council of State.<sup>145</sup> The Municipality of Athens has long ago supported the construction of a formal mosque in Athens, despite the polarization that this issue causes in the public opinion. Since 2010 specifically, the Mayor of Athens has publicly stated that the construction of a mosque is a necessity both for practical and legal reasons, adding that it will pave the way for the regularization of all those informal mosques that fulfil necessary requirements.<sup>146</sup>

In response to the most recent law passed by National Parliament in August 2016 that gave the green light (once again) for the construction of a central mosque in Athens, the Mayor of Athens George Kaminis stated that “it is a decisive step in the terrain of rights and in the self-evident right of individuals to practice their religion in conditions that respect the dignity of the faithful, in line with Greek constitution and the international treaties that the country has signed.”<sup>147</sup> Even though the municipality is not tangibly involved in and does not have any competencies in the construction of places of worship, the position of the Municipal Authority is crucial in promoting a sense of support and confidence among migrant communities, or conversely in triggering distrust and closure among them.

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<sup>143</sup> Dia Anagnostou and Dimitris Skleparis, “Trends in radicalization that may lead to violence – National background study on Greece” (2015), p. 52. Report completed in the frame of the RAD MONITOR Project.

<sup>144</sup> A. Giannoulis, “Islamic radicalisation processes in Greece: The Islamic Radicalization Index (IRI)”. International Institute for Counterterrorism (ICT), IDC Herzliya (2011), p. 16.

<sup>145</sup> Elafros Giannis, Kathimerini, “To paraskinio me to tzami kai oi epomenes meres”, 3 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.kathimerini.gr/855393/article/epikairothta/ellada/to-paraskhnio-me-to-tzami-kai-oi-epomenes-kinhseis>.

<sup>146</sup> Enikos.gr website, “Kaminis: Nai sti dimiourgia tzoumiou”, 4 April 2013. Available at: <http://www.enikos.gr/politics/134403.KaminisNai-sth-dhmiourgia-tzamiouy-.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Press release, Statement of the Mayor of Athens Giorgios Kaminis for the vote of the provision to accelerate the construction of a mosque”, Athens, 4 August 2016.

## 5.2 Case Study II: The Municipality of Thessaloniki

The municipality of Thessaloniki has a population of 324,766 inhabitants and migrants with legal residence permits that live in the local community are 45,695 residents where 22,585 are men and 23,110 are women. The main groups of immigrants in the urban area of Thessaloniki (which extends beyond the administrative boundaries of the municipality) are Albanians, followed by Georgians, Russians, Armenians, Ukrainians and Chinese (see Table 10). From those, data obtained from the Decentralized Regional Department of Thessaloniki (April 2016) shows that 22,448 TCNs are residents of the Municipality of Thessaloniki. Half of the migrant population that renewed their residence permit in 2015-2016 (when our data was drawn) in the greater urban area of Thessaloniki did so on grounds of family unification, 4,585 did so for employment, 792 did so for purposes of study (see Table 11). The remaining 18,235 in the “Other category” renewed their residence permit for reasons that are broken down in Table 12. The vast majority of them did so to obtain a ten-year residence permit (10,854), a second generation permit (3,045), a permit of indefinite (1,075) and permanent duration (1,084), or to acquire the EU status of long-term residents (694). This data shows us that the vast majority of legal TCNs in the urban area of Thessaloniki are in Greece for a long-time as they obtained long-term or of indefinite duration permits, or they are family members of TCNs who either work or have been living in Greece for several years.

In this section, we describe the municipal policies and programs that are relevant for migrants’ integration. We examine the extent to which municipal authorities take into account the needs and difficulties that migrants may face in accessing and whether the principle of equality and non-discrimination is applied.

**Table 10: Total number of residence permits issued to migrants in the urban area of Thessaloniki by country of origin of migrants, April 2016**

Country of Origin	Thessaloniki
EGYPT	457
ALBANIA	30,263
ARMENIA	2,032
GEORGIA	5,766
INDIA	101
CHINA	491
MOLDOVA	171
BANGLADESH	12
NIGERIA	233
UKRAINE	932
PAKISTAN	38
RUSSIA	2,410

SYRIA	107
PHILIPPINES	295
Other	2387
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45.695</b>

Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.

**Table 11: Categories of reasons for which residence permits were issued in the greater urban area of Thessaloniki, April 2016**

	Employment	Other	Family unification	Study	Grand Total
Thessaloniki	4585	18235	22083	792	<b>45695</b>

**Table 12: Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”**

Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”	Thessaloniki
TEN- YEAR RESIDENCE PERMIT	10854
SECOND GENERATION RESIDENCE PERMIT	3045
INDEFINITE -TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT	1075
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF LEGAL RESIDENCE	803
LONG-TERM RESIDENT PERMIT	694
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	1084
<b>TOTAL CORE SUBCATEGORIES</b>	<b>17555</b>
OTHER CATEGORIES	680
<b>TOTAL CATEGORY "OTHER"</b>	<b>18235</b>

Source: Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.

### 5.2.1 Legal-Political Domain

Following the entry into force of the ‘Kallikratis’ reform (Law 3852/2010), the municipality of Thessaloniki established a Migrant Integration Council (hereby MIC) comprising eleven members and two alternates. Its inaugural meeting was held in November 2011 in the City Hall of Thessaloniki. Since then, the MIC operates as a municipal advisory body of the City Council providing a network between the elected

representatives, the migrants' communities and the local society.<sup>148</sup> As already mentioned earlier, the MIC has the competence to document and examine problems facing migrants who live permanently in the Municipality.<sup>149</sup> The MIC in the Municipality of Thessaloniki is convened every two months and when an issue of emergency arises<sup>150</sup>. It takes its own initiatives and rarely refers to the City Council. The President of the MIC points out "that usually the decisions of the MIC were approved by the Municipal Council."<sup>151</sup>

The migrant communities who participate in the MIC are the Senegalese, the Albanians, the Serbians, the Afghans and repatriates from the former Soviet Union. Last year, the Chinese Community established its own association. However, they do not participate in the MIC due to their limited familiarization with the Greek language.<sup>152</sup> The president and one member of the MIC belong to the opposition of the City Council, and the vice president is an elected representative from the majority of the City Council. As it is provided in "Kallikratis" (Law 3852/2010, Art. 78), the migrant communities that participate in the MIC must be representatives of associations or representatives who are elected from their respective community. What this suggests is that in order to participate as members of the MIC, migrant communities must have some organizational form, if not be constituted as an association. In Thessaloniki, when it seeks to constitute a MIC, the municipal authority sends out an invitation to the associations of the main migrant communities inviting them to participate in the Council. An important constraint in this process, as noted by our interviewees, is that few migrant groups have active organizations, and even when they exist, they tend to ebb and flow, largely depending on the will and energies of a few leading individuals.<sup>153</sup>

Apart from the migrant communities that participate in the MIC, there are a number of other members of the Thessaloniki MIC. The remaining members of the MIC are representatives from NGOs and voluntary structures that engage in activities related to migrants and their integration. These are the Hellenic League of Human Rights, the Volunteer School for immigrants 'Odysseas', the 'Symbiosis' Organization, a representative from the Bar Association of Thessaloniki and the reserve members are from the Union of Lawyers for Migration Law 'IMMIGRATIO', Club 'Koumpatioton' Georgians Greek Expatriates.

As in most municipalities, the MIC in the Municipality of Thessaloniki does not have a budget of its own, which is considered a profound constraint in its ability to act effectively on behalf of migrants and their integration. Therefore, the actions that it seeks to implement must be carried out in cooperation with the Deputy Mayor for Social Policy and the respective administrative services, as well as with other departments.<sup>154</sup> In every integration action that was taken part in the local level, the migrants' communities were involved. These actions were speeches in the City Council, conferences and Festivals.<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, the MIC has organized several

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<sup>148</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>149</sup> Law 3852/2010 "New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration –Project Kallikratis"

<sup>150</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>151</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>152</sup> Notes from the LOMIGRAS project second focus groups held in Thessaloniki, 25 April 2016.

<sup>153</sup> Notes from the LOMIGRAS project second focus groups held in Thessaloniki, 25 April 2016.

<sup>154</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>155</sup> Interview, Representative of the Albanian Community, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016.

actions and events to inform migrants about legal issues, and to raise awareness among the local population and connect it with immigrant communities. Information and advice provided by the MIC to migrants are about social security matters, and matters pertaining to nationality acquisition, among others, which have direct consequences for their integration. Since last year, when the Mediterranean refugee crisis unfolded, the Thessaloniki MIC became actively involved in matters related to the reception and accommodation of refugees.<sup>156</sup> Since its establishment in 2011, the MIC, however, has not prepared a coherent integration plan for the integration of migrants in local government. This has been attributed to the lack of resources and the fact that the MIC does not have any budget to pursue such actions on its own. Instead, it only issues statements and makes proposals to the City Council.<sup>157</sup>

Occasionally, the MIC intervenes in to investigate complaints. For example, two years ago, it intervened following complaints from migrants that an officer from the Institute of Social Insurance (IKA) in Thessaloniki interpreted in a narrow way a ministerial circular, refusing the issue the necessary certificate required for the renewal of residence permit to those who had the minimum number of insurance stamps provided for by law.<sup>158</sup> With the intervention by the MIC of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the issue was solved and the IKA department reverted to the standard interpretation of the contentious circular. The MIC also intervened twice to informally investigate charges of racism and to help the concerned individuals bring charges in court. In the first, a bus driver allegedly coerced two African passengers to get off the bus because they had not validated their tickets.<sup>159</sup> When a number of passengers expressed criticism of the driver's behavior towards the migrants, the bus driver replied that he is a member of the Golden Dawn. The second incident was about a doctor in the greater area of Thessaloniki who had posted in a public clinic of the National Agency for Health Care Facilities, an inscription with racist content.<sup>160</sup>

The establishment of Migrant Integration Councils in municipalities was a step towards the political representation of migrants at the local government level. It institutionalized the civic, cultural and political participation of Third Country Nationals and their associations in the host society. With the suspension of the right of TCNs to vote (and to be elected) in local elections though, the MIC was deprived of its potential. As migrant representatives admit, the MIC of Thessaloniki functions as the voice of migrants' communities in the City Council, yet, its role is consultative and it lacks political weight as well as decision-making power. It is therefore extremely weak in providing meaningful representation to migrants.<sup>161</sup> Its weakness in this regard may be seen as a factor that explains the limited interest among migrants to get involved in the MIC, which has been noted by our interviewees, and the fact that they do not have a compelling motive to engage with it in a sustained manner.<sup>162</sup> As a representative of an association of the Albanians in Thessaloniki, who are the most well-integrated, claimed, more steps need to be taken in order to integrate migrants in local government, such as to employ migrants in the municipal

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<sup>156</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>157</sup> Interview, Hellenic League for Human Rights, Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

<sup>158</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>159</sup> To Vima, "Thessaloniki: Odigos katevase duo metanastes apo to leoforeio", 12 April 2013. Available at: <http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=507428>

<sup>160</sup> LIFO, "Anepithimitoi oi Evraioi edo" se pinakida iatreiou stin Thessaloniki', 2 March 2014.

Available at: <http://www.lifo.gr/now/society/43325>

<sup>161</sup> Interview with representative of the Albanian community in the MIC, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016.

<sup>162</sup> Notes from the LOMIGRAS project second focus groups held in Thessaloniki, 25 April 2016.

administration.<sup>163</sup> In order to promote their organization and mobilization, the municipality must also tangibly support migrant associations, at least by providing them with an office space.<sup>164</sup>

## 5.2.2 Social-Economic Domain

The Kallikratis' Reform that was introduced by the Law 3852/2010 transferred many responsibilities to the local level authorities. In the field of Social Policy, the reform transferred a great number of competencies to municipalities, following the example of the self-governing structures in other European countries. In the Municipality of Thessaloniki the Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health that was established by the Kallikratis Plan, includes the following departments: the Department of Social Policy and Gender Equality, the Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health, the Social Welfare department, the Department of Welfare Benefits and administrative support<sup>165</sup>. The Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health, designs and implements a wide range of social policy programs, including the establishment of social structures for the uninsured and poor residents.<sup>166</sup> While some services are exclusively for residents of the municipality, others such as allowances dispensed by the Department of Welfare Benefit are for residents of the greater urban area of Thessaloniki.<sup>167</sup>

### 5.2.2.1 Social and Health Services

The beneficiaries of the social services and various kinds of allowances dispensed by the municipality are Greek citizens, citizens of EU Member States, Third Country Nationals (TCNs), citizens with legal residence, TCN with non-renewed residence permit, asylum seekers, and in many cases undocumented migrants. As the Head of the Social Policy Department stated “there are many times when undocumented migrants are able to have access to services because they belong to other vulnerable group such as homeless, addicts or refugees.”<sup>168</sup> One example of a social structure, from which migrants benefit, is the Social Grocery that operates in the Municipality of Thessaloniki since 2010. The beneficiaries are 400 low income families annually and about 100 of those are migrants. Moreover, the municipality supplies every day 700 food distributions to poor residents and 300 of those are provided to migrants.<sup>169</sup>

An important social structure for migrants in the Municipality of Thessaloniki is the “Shelter for Asylum Seekers’ Families”. It was created in 2015 by the Municipality of Thessaloniki, in cooperation with the NGO “Arsis” and the Greek Council for Refugees, which are partners of the project.<sup>170</sup> The building in which the

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<sup>163</sup> Interview with representative of the Albanian community in the MIC, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016

<sup>164</sup> Interview with representative of the Albanian community in the MIC, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016

<sup>165</sup> Interview, Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>166</sup> Interview, Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>167</sup> Interview, Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>168</sup> Interview, Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>169</sup> Data provided by the Department of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki.

<sup>170</sup> ARSIS website, available at: <http://arsis.gr/en/shelter-for-asylum-seekers-families/>

Shelter is hosted belongs to the Municipality of Thessaloniki. It is funded by the Ministry of Labor, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity and it provides temporary accommodation to persons who have applied for international protection in Greece.<sup>171</sup> It is particularly intended for families with at least one underage child, single parent families and single adult women in a state of pregnancy. The services that the specialized personnel of the Shelter provides, include coverage of basic needs (food and accommodation for six months), support (legal, psycho-social, advice about employment), language interpretation, educational activities for children, adolescents and adults (Greek language learning, workshops etc.), preparation for autonomous living and social inclusion, and ongoing support after the end of the hosting period. It also engages in awareness-raising measures and actions of networking with the local community and volunteerism.<sup>172</sup> The Shelter for Asylum Seekers' Families constitutes an intermediate social structure in the transition process from the uncertainty of the first reception and/or detention to the autonomous social life under the recognition of the civil and social rights of the international protection applicants. The aim is the provision of support services which can lead to the empowerment of its temporary guests.

In the sector of Public Health, from the beginning of the implementation of the Kallikratis plan (Law 3852/2010), the Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health in the Municipality of Thessaloniki implemented a vaccination program for poor and uninsured people (children and adults).<sup>173</sup> At the beginning it was funded by the central government, but its financing was subsequently taken over by the Municipality. The Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health also organizes the provision of medical services that include specialized doctors, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, radiologists, etc., many of whom provide services on a volunteer basis and in cooperation with NGOs. The beneficiaries of the provided health services are indigent and uninsured residents who are residents of the Municipality.<sup>174</sup> Migrants who live permanently in the local community can have access to health services only by providing their personal data. In some cases, when the departments have references from NGOs (social reasons) they can accept individuals regardless of whether they are residents of the municipality or not.

**Table 13: Beneficiaries of the Municipality's Clinics health services in 2012-2015**

Country Origin of Beneficiaries	Number
Egypt	2
Ethiopia	1
Albania	148
Armenia	13
Afghan	41

<sup>171</sup> It consists of 7 autonomous rooms with an overall capacity of 28 beds.

<sup>172</sup> ARSIS website, available at : <http://arsis.gr/en/shelter-for-asylum-seekers-families/>

<sup>173</sup> Interview, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

<sup>174</sup> Interview, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

Venezuela	1
Venin	1
Bosnia	1
Bulgaria	5
Georgia	55
Ghana	3
China	9
Bugladess	2
Nigeria	74
Ukraine	4
Pakistan	2
Poland	2
Romania	4
Russia	34
Senegalese	35
Serbia	1
Somalia	6
Sudan	2
Syria	6
Tunisia	1
Ivory Coast	1
Turkmenistan	1
Greece	700
<b>On average</b>	<b>1155</b>

*Data from the Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health in the Municipality of Thessaloniki.*

As we can see in Table 13 above, the number of beneficiaries of the Municipality's Clinics health services, who were migrants, were 455 among 1155 in the period from 2012-2015.<sup>175</sup> Those people had access to health services such as gynecological tests, Ophthalmologist tests, Pulmonologist tests etc.

The main obstacles in migrants' access to health services (and to the social services more broadly) are their limited familiarization with the Greek language and the lack of information. Migrants are not informed and they do not know where to go and how to make use of services. Due to the lack of resources, the Department of

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<sup>175</sup> Data provided by the Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health in the Municipality of Thessaloniki.

Public Health has not engaged in actions specifically aimed at providing information about its health services to TCNs, such as the printing of brochures in languages other than Greek.<sup>176</sup> While in some social structures, information and other documents are provided in a few foreign languages, primarily Albanian and Russian, the municipality does not provide specialist translators or cultural mediators in every social service to facilitate migrants' access.<sup>177</sup> In order to disseminate information to the migrant communities, the municipal authorities spread it to NGOs working on migrants, and also channel it to the MIC that in this regard functions as an interface connecting local authorities with migrant communities.<sup>178</sup>

In 2013, the Department of Public Health in the Municipality of Thessaloniki was funded by the European Integration Fund to implement a project aimed at facilitating migrants' access to medical and social services at the primary health level in the large urban centers of the country.<sup>179</sup> Social workers came into contact with migrants' communities in order to publicize the implemented actions. The information campaign involved the translation of flyers and brochures in foreign languages such as Albanian and Russian. While highly pertinent and needed, such actions are limited in duration and are not sustainable. These limitations are compounded by a slow process of bureaucratic approval that in the end leaves little time to implement the project.

### 5.2.2.2 Day Care

The Directorate of Children' Day Care in the Municipality of Thessaloniki operates 17 day care centers for children providing food, a learning program, music courses, gymnastics and medical care. The Directorate is also responsible for the authorization and the supervision of 200 private day care centers, as well as for the administrative-financial control and supervision of 90 subsidized charitable bodies in the greater area of Thessaloniki. The beneficiaries of the provided services are Greek citizens, citizens of EU Member States, and third country nationals (TCNs) with legal residence and renewed residence permit. The Directorate of Children' Day Care does not accept undocumented migrants. The head of the Directorate states that "the issue of children's day care is a sensitive one. Children should be vaccinated and they should submit the doctor's certificate from the beginning of the school year. There is a standard procedure and it should be followed."<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Interview, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

<sup>177</sup> Interview, Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>178</sup> Interview, Department of Operational Planning and Systems Information & Communication Technologies, Municipality of Thessaloniki, 15/02/2016.

<sup>179</sup> Interview, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016. Data also provided by Directorate of Operational Planning and Systems Information & Communication Technologies, Municipality of Thessaloniki. The leader of the action was the Municipality of Athens (Anonymous Development Company for Computer Units) and the partners were the Municipality of Thessaloniki the (Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health) and the Development Company of the Municipality of Heraklion on June 2015.

<sup>180</sup> Interview, Directorate of Kindergartens, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

**Table 14: Number of children in the day care centers of the Municipality of Thessaloniki per year**

SCHOOL YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
School Year 2008-2009	61	61
School Year 2009-2010	61	61
School Year 2010 -2011	60	60
School Year 2011-2012	68	68
School Year 2012-2013	77	77
School Year 2013-2014	115	115
School year 2014-2015	133	130
School Year 2015-2016	137	132
<b>School Years 2008-2015</b>	<b>Total: 712</b>	<b>704</b>

*Source: Data from the Directorate of Children's Day Care in the Municipality of Thessaloniki*

As we can see in the table above, from 2008 to 2015 school year, the majority of migrants' applications for day care are approved. In 2008-2015, 704 out of 712 such applications were approved.

The policy of municipal authorities in regards to migrants' children in day care is based on the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities regardless nationality, ethnic origin, and religion. As the head of the Directorate of Kindergartens stresses "the migrants' children are treated with the same way as the Greek children. Their families are supported in various ways. The department provides counseling to parents. Foreign parents are very cooperative and they participated more than the Greek parents in the counseling programs."<sup>181</sup> For example, if a child is experiencing speech difficulties, the psychologist communicate with their parents in order to help him. Still, there are times, she claims, that migrant parents believe that they are a minority and that they are treated as a minority. The Department of Social Policy in the Municipality of Thessaloniki is responsible to disseminate information about the social provisions and benefits that are available to migrants. They also provide information for the social services on the website of the Municipality.<sup>182</sup> The biggest obstacle for migrants' integration in the sector of children's day care is once again the limited familiarization of parents' with the Greek language.

### 5.2.2.3 Employment

In the context of the economic crisis since 2009-2010, the rate of unemployment in Greece has dramatically increased and many people lost their jobs and remained without social security and insurance. Many migrants who are typically employed in

<sup>181</sup> Interview, Directorate of Kindergartens, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

<sup>182</sup> Interview, Directorate of Kindergartens, Municipality of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, 18/02/2016.

the sector of construction, day care, cleaning, or tourism lost their jobs and they were not able to renew their stay permit. In this difficult economic environment the reform of Kallikratis<sup>183</sup> that was introduced by the Law 3852/2010 transferred competencies to the municipalities in order to enhance local employability. Local Authorities are responsible to promote employment by engaging in advisory activities and by establishing Municipal and Community Information Offices for Employment, in cooperation with public institutions and local businesses.

The operation of the Labor Office in the Municipality of Thessaloniki started in January 2015, in cooperation with the Labor Institute of the General Confederation of Workers in Greece (GSEE).<sup>184</sup> The objective of the Office is to inform and to support job seekers in order to improve their chances of finding employment. The Labor Office of the municipality provides information and advice to unemployed people, including migrants, about employment prospects, training, career guidance, social security, and labor relations, in conjunction with the corresponding service of the GSEE Labor Institute in Thessaloniki.<sup>185</sup>

Municipalities are also responsible for implementing comprehensive local plans, action programs and initiatives in order to promote employment and the social integration of different categories of unemployed under national and European policies. The Municipality of Thessaloniki has not so far implemented any program to promote employment and vocational training at the local level.

#### **5.2.2.4 Education – The voluntary school Odysseus**

Education in Greece is mandatory for 9 years and all children regardless of whether their parents have legal status, are entitled to it. With Law 2910/2001 (Art. 40), the children who were born in third-countries and live in Greece are obliged and have the right to attend school and complete the years of compulsory education.<sup>186</sup> The law guarantees schooling for all children, citizens or foreigners, from the age of 6 to the age of 15. While the right of migrant children to attend school regardless of legal status is guaranteed, there are several limitations in terms of the support that they receive. While the Greek education system is supposed to have an integration strategy for migrants, in practice no specific and coherent strategy that is implemented. In secondary school, the integration classes are not enough to cover existing needs, and in high school such classes are rarely offered.<sup>187</sup> School dropout rates are highest among migrants' children.

In the view of a teacher with experience in teaching Greek to migrants, the Greek education system is characterized by an ethnocentric approach defined by Greek national identity and the Christian Orthodox religion and “it is not interested to

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<sup>183</sup> Law 3852/2010 “New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration-Kallikratis plan”

<sup>184</sup> Website of the City of Thessaloniki, available at:

<http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/DioikitikesYpiresies/GenDnsiDioikOikonYpiresion/DnsiEksipirEpixeirimatia/grafeio-ergasias>

<sup>185</sup> Information from the Labour Office in the Municipality of Thessaloniki

<sup>186</sup> Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas, ELIAMEP. “Greek Education Policy and the Challenge of Migration: An Intercultural View of Assimilation. It can be accessed at [http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/en/2008/10/greek\\_education\\_policy\\_and\\_the\\_challenge\\_of\\_migration\\_triandaf\\_and\\_gropas\\_emilie\\_wp3\\_22\\_nov\\_07.pdf](http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/en/2008/10/greek_education_policy_and_the_challenge_of_migration_triandaf_and_gropas_emilie_wp3_22_nov_07.pdf) Paper prepared for the EMILIE project, WP3, Deliverable D4\* 22 November 2007, p 4

<sup>187</sup> Interview, Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus", Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

provide a kind of education that would act as a lever for upward social mobility in the integration of migrants.”<sup>188</sup> NGO workers report that many times the Greek school environment accentuates and makes more visible differences between migrant and Greek children, reinforcing a sense of exclusion among the latter: “There are differences in the way that children dress up, and what they eat at school; and if something happens the scapegoat is usually an immigrant child. Not in intercultural schools, but in the schools of the neighborhood.”<sup>189</sup>

During the period 2008-2011, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning operated the Educational Project Odysseys “Education of migrants in Greek language, the Greek history and Greek culture.” The implementation of the program was carried out by Institute of Adults Continuing Education of the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Lifelong Learning Institute.<sup>190</sup> The “Odysseus” project offered teaching of the Greek language as a second language, Greek history and Greek culture, to immigrants over 16 years old who were legal residents in Greece. It had 993 sections with 16,625 students, while in the period 2012-2014, it operated 1.445 sections with 28.900 trainees.<sup>191</sup> The program aimed at providing the language skills, as well as the social and intercultural competences required for the social inclusion of the participants and their families.<sup>192</sup> In the Municipality of Thessaloniki, however, the number of migrants who participated was low. The majority of migrants did not know about it, which again points to the difficulty of disseminating and getting the information across to their communities.<sup>193</sup>

Since 1997, a voluntary educational structure for adult non-native speakers to learn Greek operates in the municipality of Thessaloniki – the school “Odysseus”. It is a school where migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and repatriated adults can learn the Greek. It is entirely supported by and operates with volunteers (teachers and others), catering to a wide target group of different social, economic and educational background. Greek courses are offered for 4 teaching hours per week from October until May, and additional classes may be offered throughout the year. Besides the Greek lessons, it also offers courses for learning English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, and Italian, which are open to Greeks as well.<sup>194</sup> It is the second term that a representative from the voluntary school ‘Odysseus’ participates in the MIC. The school has approximately 300-400 students on an annual basis.<sup>195</sup>

The aim of the school is to create the space where the students can develop a critical approach to social inequality, experience inter-cultural exchanges, and express themselves creatively. Excursions are also organized, cultural visits to museums and neighboring towns take place, parties, film screenings, exhibitions of works created

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<sup>188</sup> Interview, Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus", Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

<sup>189</sup> Interview, NGO ‘PRAKSIS’, Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016

<sup>190</sup> Geniki Grammateia Dia Viou Mathisis web site, available at: <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/press/275-lr-l-r>

<sup>191</sup> Geniki Grammateia Dia Viou Mathisis web site, available at: <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/press/275-lr-l-r>

<sup>192</sup> See website of the “Odysseus” Education of Immigrants in the Greek Language, the Greek History and the Greek Culture, Available at: <https://www.inedivim.gr/προγράμματα/odysseus-education-immigrants-greek-language-greek-history-and-greek-culture?lang=en>

<sup>193</sup> Interview, Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus", Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

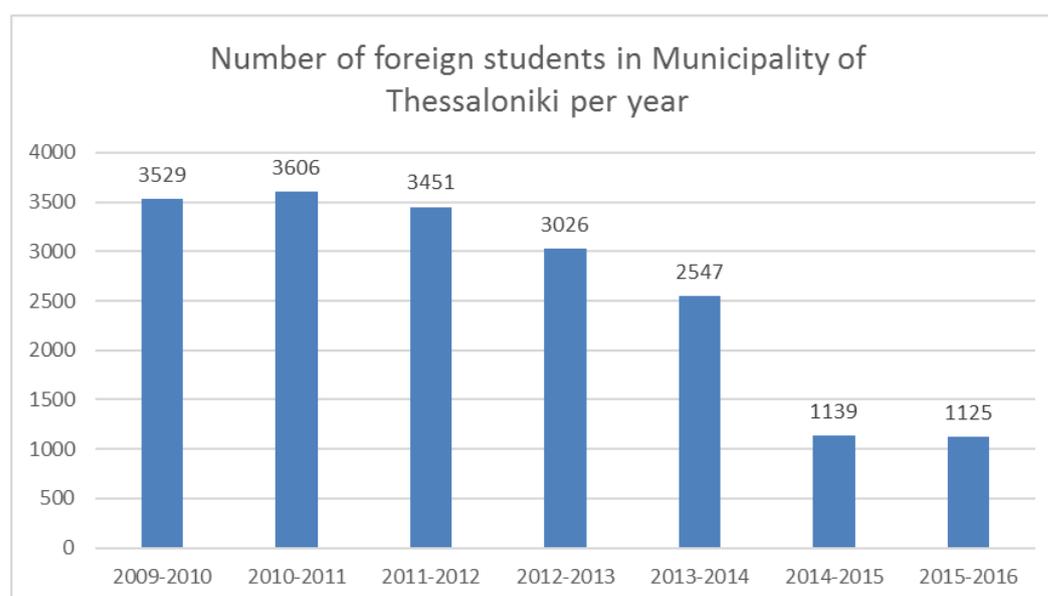
<sup>194</sup> Website of the “Odysseus” Education of Immigrants in the Greek Language, the Greek History and the Greek Culture, Available at: <http://sxoleioodysseas.weebly.com/piomicroniotaomicroniota-epsilontamualphasigmatauepsilon.html>

<sup>195</sup> Interview, Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus", Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

by the students and theatrical performances of the “Odysseus” drama group. From the beginning of the MIC’s establishment, the “Odysseus” school liaised with it to promote the Council among the migrant communities and to bring them into contact with the local population. The “Odysseus” schools has been a member of the MIC for a second term now.

Since 2010, there has been a drop in the number of students attending it, a trend that is also evidenced in the public schools of Thessaloniki, as data provided by the Decentralized Administration of Thessaloniki shows (see Figure 9). The decline is particularly evidenced among Albanian and Russian-speaking students, even though among the latter the numbers have stabilized or even increased somewhat.<sup>196</sup> The reduction of Albanians is not only due to the fact that some left after the economic crisis set in. It can also be conjectured that a few thousand Albanians among the young generation have received Greek nationality, and are thus no longer recorded as TCNs. In the past few years, a large number of migrants from Africa and countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, who were either undocumented or where asylum applicants left the city to go to West Europe during 2015 and the first few months of 2016 while the northern border was still open.

**Figure 9: Number of foreign students in Municipality of Thessaloniki per year**



*Source: Data provided by the Decentralized Regional Administration of Thessaloniki, April 2016.*

### 5.2.3 Cultural-Religious Domain

A variety of activities are organized under the aegis of the Municipality of Thessaloniki to celebrate and demonstrate the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of the City. These range from food festivals, seminars and workshops that

<sup>196</sup> Interview, Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus", Thessaloniki, 16/02/2016.

are held a few times annually, including in the migrants own languages, which are occasionally funded by the European Integration Fund, such as a festival related to migration and social integration in June 2011.<sup>197</sup> In regard to religious diversity, the majority political group in the municipal council under the Mayor Yannis Boutaris strongly supports the freedom of the different religious groups to express and practice their religious faith. Even if such support does not come with anything tangible, it is still significant because it sends a positive message to the migrant residents of the city.

Beyond the municipality, the largest and best integrated migrant community – that of Albanians – has taken the initiative to help children and adults preserve their native language. Since 2005, the Albanian Community in cooperation with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has organized Albanian language courses for migrants who live permanently in the local community. Every Sunday migrants’ (children and adults) are taught Albanian as a second language.<sup>198</sup> It is completely supported by volunteers and it is free of charge. The representative of the Albanian Community points out that “it is very important the fact that we are able to maintain the dual identity.”<sup>199</sup> The language courses take place in the Aristotle University. This structure helps many people from the same community to connect with each other and to discuss the problems that they face. Sometimes, people from the same community have found jobs in this educational structure.<sup>200</sup> During these years that the language courses are taking place, the Albanian community has developed a close connection with the University.

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<sup>197</sup> The festival was organized in June 2011 by the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the NGO “Arsis”, and the Union of Journalists of Daily Newspapers in Macedonia-Thrace. Data provided by Directorate of Operational Planning and Systems Information & Communication Technologies, Municipality of Thessaloniki.

<sup>198</sup> Interview, Representative of the Albanian Community, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016.

<sup>199</sup> Interview, Representative of the Albanian Community, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016.

<sup>200</sup> Interview, Representative of the Albanian Community, Thessaloniki, 17/02/2016.

### 5.3 Case study III: The Municipality of Heraklion

Heraklion is the largest city and the administrative capital of the island of Crete. It is one of the largest cities in Greece. According to the results of the 2011 census, the population of the city was 140,730 inhabitants, the municipality's was 173,993 while the Heraklion urban area has a population of 225,574 and it extends over an area of 684.3 km<sup>2</sup> (264.2 sq. m). In 2015-2016, migrant residents of the Heraklion urban area who were granted legal residence permits were 12,681, where 6,403 were men and 6,278 were women. Half of them (6183) were granted residence permits on grounds of family unification (see Table 16), while a bit less than 5000 were granted long-term, indefinite or permanent duration permits (see Table 17).

The largest percentage of migrants who live in the municipality of Heraklion are from Albania (almost 75% of the total population), followed by migrants from Georgia, Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, Moldavia, and Syria. From January 1, 2011, according to the Law 3852/2010, "New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration-Kallikratis plan", the Municipality of Heraklion merged the municipalities of Gorgolaini, Temenos, Paliani and New Alikarnassos. This section presents the findings based on the data collected from, and the interviews conducted in the Municipality of Heraklion in regard to migrants' integration. It describes the municipal policies and programs that are relevant for migrants' integration, the extent to which they take into account the needs and difficulties that migrants may face and whether the principle of equality and non-discrimination is applied.

**Table 15: Total number of residence permits issued to migrants in the urban area of Heraklion by country of origin of migrants, April 2016**

Country of origin	Herakleion
EGYPT	64
ALBANIA	9.537
ARMENIA	64
GEORGIA	323
INDIA	56
CHINA	91
MOLDOVA	222
BANGLADESH	23
NIGERIA	19
UKRAINE	513
PAKISTAN	51
RUSSIA	532
SYRIA	266

PHILIPPINES	106
Other	733
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12.600</b>

Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.

**Table 16: Categories of reasons for which residence permits were issued in the greater urban area of Heraklion, April 2016**

City	Employment	Other	Family unification	Study
Heraklion	1110	5268	6183	39

**Table 17: Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”**

Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”	Heraklion
TEN- YEAR RESIDENCE PERMIT	2176
SECOND GENERATION RESIDENCE PERMIT	673
INDEFINITE -TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT	829
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF LEGAL RESIDENCE	200
LONG-TERM RESIDENT PERMIT	903
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	219
<b>TOTAL CORE SUBCATEGORIES</b>	<b>5000</b>
OTHER CATEGORIES	268
<b>TOTAL CATEGORY "OTHER"</b>	<b>5268</b>

Source: Data obtained from the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.

### 5.3.1 The Legal-Political Domain

The Migrant Integration Council (MIC) in the Municipality of Heraklion was established in 2012, and it engages in actions that are related to migrants' integration and the protection of human rights.<sup>201</sup> It is supervised by the Deputy Mayor of Social Policy, and it is supported by the Department of Social Policy, Innovative Actions, Public Health and Gender Equality (Directorate of Social Development in the Municipality of Heraklion). The Department of Social Work (Institute of Intercultural Education and Action) of the School of Health and Welfare Services, Technological Educational Institute of Crete<sup>202</sup> is an associate of the MIC and acts as an expert on integration of the MIC.<sup>203</sup> The Council also cooperates with a number of other local social entities, such as the Heraklion Bar Association, the Association of Physicians, and the Labor Center of Heraklion, and several others.<sup>204</sup> The members of the MIC comprise locally elected representatives of the city council, representatives of the migrants' communities and associations, and representatives from the other local bodies, with which the MIC cooperates. According to its internal regulation, the regular members of the MIC in the Municipality of Heraklion are nine, while the alternate members are from nine to thirteen.<sup>205</sup> In the new term following the 2014 local elections, the MIC has eleven regular members and sixteen alternates.<sup>206</sup>

Non-Greeks who are members of the City Council participate directly in the MIC. There are three regular members of the MIC who are representatives of migrants' associations (including 3-5 alternate members).<sup>207</sup> In the new term of the Council since 2014, in order to enhance the participation of migrants at the local level, the MIC members from migrant associations were increased from three to four (and the alternate members to five).<sup>208</sup> The members from the migrants' associations who participate in the MIC should have under the current legislation their residence authorization documents and they must reside in the city of Heraklion at least for the last two years.<sup>209</sup> In the Municipality of Heraklion there are organized migrants' associations with statutes adopted: the Albanian Association and the Russian-Speaking Association of Heraklion. Additionally, there are other migrants' communities that are organized on an informal basis, such as the Filipino Club and the Syrian community.<sup>210</sup> The Syrian community is a small community that is present in the city of Heraklion for many years, well before the war that broke out in Syria a few years ago. Nowadays, with the wave of the new refugees, the number of the

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<sup>201</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>202</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>203</sup> Interview, Laboratory of Intercultural Education and Action/TEI of Crete, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>204</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>205</sup> See City Council decisions 23 / 8-9-2011, 327 / 27-3-2014, available at

<http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>206</sup> See City Council decision 215/11 –2016. Available at <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-melh/sem-melh.html>. According to the internal regulation (City Council decisions 23 / 8-9-2011, 327 / 27-3-2014), the elected representatives of the City Council who are regular members of the MIC are four, and the alternate members are four 4-5. See <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>207</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at : <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>208</sup> Interview, Laboratory of Intercultural Education and Action/TEI of Crete, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>209</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>210</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

Syrian migrants has increased. The members of the MIC with assistance of the Bar association of Heraklion are currently making efforts to establish the Syrian Association in the local community.<sup>211</sup>

Apart from the elected representatives and the migrants' communities who participate in the MIC, its members include representatives from the Bar Association of Heraklion, the Medical Association of Heraklion, the Labor Center of Heraklion, the Hellenic League for Human Rights, the Hellenic Red Cross, the 'Oasis' Association for child, the Association of Women of Heraklion, representative from the International Union of Police of the prefecture of Heraklion and representatives from the Environmental Organization 'Agia Triada'.<sup>212</sup> The wide local network of member and partner organizations that are engaged with the Heraklion MIC reflects the way in which integration is understood as a multi-faceted social process. As the President of the MIC of Heraklion stated "the issue of migrants' integration at the local is not an issue that the municipal, the regional or the central authority can manage. It is a policy, a strategy, and a series of initiatives that require the active involvement of all the city's structures and stakeholders."<sup>213</sup>

The members of the MIC are appointed with a decision of the City Council. The president and the vice president are elected representatives of the City Council and they are appointed by the same decision of the City Council which also defines the members of the MIC.<sup>214</sup> In each new term, a public call to the migrants' communities of Heraklion is issued, inviting them to participate in the MIC. The participation in the MIC is honorary and unpaid and the members are people who are involved in activities related to migrants' integration and the protection of human rights. The term of the Migrant Integration Council is two years and ends with the election of the new Board.<sup>215</sup>

According to its internal regulation (Article 3), the Heraklion MIC aims to record and investigate the needs of migrants who reside in the municipality, address issues relating to their integration in and interaction with the local community and the municipal and other public services. The MIC can submit recommendations to the City Council, to organize actions in order to promote the smooth integration of migrants. In cooperation with the municipal authorities or other stakeholders, it can also organize events and actions to facilitate the interaction of migrants with the public authorities and services, to solve specific problems, to raise public awareness about multiculturalism, to promote social interaction of local residents with different cultural identities, to combat xenophobia and racism and to strengthen social cohesion at the local level.<sup>216</sup> The Heraklion MIC convenes at least once a month, but also more regularly, if there are urgent matters to be discussed and tackled with. Its role in relation to the City Council is primarily advisory.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>212</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-melh/sem-melh.html>

<sup>213</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>214</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>215</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>216</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/sem-kanonismos/sem-kanonismos.html>

<sup>217</sup> Interview, Hellenic League of Human Rights, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

The Heraklion MIC has not formulated an integration strategy at the local level. The integration actions that the Council has organized are primarily information dissemination sessions in the local districts of Heraklion on legal issues related to migration and migrant rights, cultural events and various events to raise awareness about racism and ethnic diversity at the local level.<sup>218</sup> Another important action that it had been organized was an information event in the Albanian Community regarding recent legal changes on residence permits.<sup>219</sup>

The overall appraisal of the MIC of the Heraklion Municipality is positive. Its main contribution acknowledged by our interviewees is that it promotes a degree of inclusion of, as well as cooperation and civic engagement among migrant communities at the local level. As the president of the MIC states, “the members of the migrant communities who participate in the MIC are involved in all actions and events. The integration plans are designed and implemented in cooperation with every member of the Council.”<sup>220</sup> The president of the Russian-speaking Association points out that “in the MIC all the migrants’ communities are united. Through the MIC we are able to invite every migrant community at any time and we can easily disseminate information. The MIC is a very important institution for all migrants who live in the City of Heraklion.”<sup>221</sup>

A significant limitation in the degree of migrants’ civic engagement through the MIC, which has been found in the other municipalities that we have studied, is the low level of organization among most migrant communities. This was confirmed by the president of the Albanian Association who stated that “the majority of migrants do not participate in the local social and political structures. When you have to travel in a foreign country and to find a job, you do not have enough time to participate and get involved in public life. Even though migrants from Albania are living in the Municipality of Heraklion the last 24 years, we established our own association only the last year.”<sup>222</sup> Despite the MIC’s limitations, not least of which is the low level of migrants’ organization, the MIC is still regarded as a positive structure, in so far as it functions as a network among migrants and other social institutions in the Municipality of Heraklion. Through the MIC, the migrants are able to find information about the social services of the Municipality and to come into contact with other local social bodies such as the International Organization for Migration, the Bar association, the Medical Association, and others.

The Municipal Authority in Heraklion explicitly applies the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities regardless of nationality, ethnic origin, and religion. The president of the MIC stresses that “we do not have much to say on this. Racism and discrimination have no place in the municipality of Heraklion.”<sup>223</sup> In the municipal administration of Heraklion, behaviors that can be recorded as racist have rarely been noted. This does not mean that racism is not present among the local society at large.<sup>224</sup> There are people who disagree not only with the integration but also with the presence of migrants in the city. As the president of the MIC mentions

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<sup>218</sup> Interviews, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>219</sup> Interview, Hellenic League of Human Rights, Heraklion, 2/06/2016 and interview, Bar Association of Heraklion, Heraklion, 1/6/2016.

<sup>220</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>221</sup> Interview, Cultural Association of Russian Speakers in Crete, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>222</sup> Interview, Albanian Community, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>223</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>224</sup> Interview, Hellenic League of Human Rights, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

“we have to work hard and send the message that immigrants are people like us. They are traveling in another country to find a job and to create a better future for them and their families.”<sup>225</sup>

### 5.3.2 The Social-Economic domain

Since 2011, in order to respond to the changes brought about with the “Kallikratis” administrative reform, but also to the rapidly deteriorating conditions of the socio-economic crisis, the Municipal authority of Heraklion, redesigned the social services that it provides. The Directorate of Social Development of the municipality is composed of five departments: Community Care (former KAPI)<sup>226</sup>, the Department of Social Policy, Innovative Actions of Public Health and Gender Equality, the department of Social Benefits, and the administrative department. The department of Community Care was established in 2011 and provides primary health care services – primarily information, counseling, and prevention – to the city’s residents.<sup>227</sup> The department’s staff comprises doctors, occupational therapists, a midwife, social workers, sociologists, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and domestic assistants for elderly.<sup>228</sup> There are ten centers in the Municipality of Heraklion that cover the needs of every Municipal and Local Community. The municipal health services operate as the interconnection of the health facilities at the local and regional level. Legal migrants and their families have equal access with Greek citizens to the provided services.<sup>229</sup>

The Department of Social Policy, Innovate Actions of Public Health and Gender Equality functions as a network between the migrants’ communities and the local social institutions. The Social workers of the department are not members of the MIC but participate in the Council and they have supported the MIC from its beginning.<sup>230</sup> They assist the MIC to organize its members and they propose the implementation of integration actions, which they often organize jointly in order to extend their reach into the local community. The Department of Social Policy is able to handle every case and effectively provide social services to the beneficiaries through its connection with other municipal services and local stakeholders. The department also has the responsibility to provide assistance to residents with economic difficulties, depending on the need and the priority.<sup>231</sup> It grants social allowances to handicapped people, licenses to care and preschool education units, and certificates to those below poverty line.<sup>232</sup>

The Department of Social Policy also provides services to migrants and their families who live permanently to the local community. The social workers from the Social Policy Department point out that “the interaction between the migrants and the

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<sup>225</sup> Interview, Migrant Integration Council, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>226</sup> Interview, Department of Social Development, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 1/06/2016.

<sup>227</sup> Interviews, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>228</sup> Interview, Department of Social Development, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 1/06/2016.

<sup>229</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>230</sup> Interviews, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>231</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>232</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at:

<http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/epidomatikh-politikh/epidomatikh-politikh-kai-pronoiak-epidomata.html>

municipal services varies”.<sup>233</sup> The beneficiaries of the services provided of the Municipality of Heraklion are citizens, Greek citizens, citizens of EU Member States, Third Country Nationals (TCNs) citizens with legal residence, TCN who have not been able to renew their residence permit, asylum seekers and irregular migrants (undocumented).

During the economic crisis, the municipality of Heraklion created a solidarity network to tackle poverty and provide relief for the poor and low income families that face problems of survival. The new social structures in the Municipality of Heraklion involves actors of public and private entities. In the sector of Public Health the social Health Clinic has played an important role concerning migrants and their families in this difficult economic environment.<sup>234</sup> Another important structure in this network is the Social Solidarity Network Association of Heraklion that provides free primary health care services to the inhabitants of the municipality who lack health insurance.<sup>235</sup> This network consists of volunteers’ doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health visitors, social workers, secretaries, technicians, laborers and other staff for general support.

Another structure is the Social Clinic that functions with volunteer members or friends of the Network.<sup>236</sup> It operates by appointment and provides to uninsured residents free access to health services, either by directly or through another organized entity (municipal social services, Church, NGOs, Association of the Unemployed, Labor Centre, etc.) The services that it provides include medical examinations, vaccinations for children, and psychosocial support, among others. In also operates a pharmacy which provides free medicines. The Social Clinic is supported by various medical specialists-doctors who are volunteers of the Network. They provide free health access in their clinics to patients that they have reference from the doctors of the Social Clinic. The Social Grocery in the Municipality of Heraklion was launched in 2014. It is aimed to support citizens with grave financial difficulties. According to the Deputy Mayor, it provides food to over 500 families (approximately 1680 people).<sup>237</sup>

### 5.3.2.1 Day care

The Municipality of Heraklion provides day care services through the Municipal Organization for Early Childhood Education, Care and Mass Sports. Its purpose is to provide day care to babies, infants and children for the balanced growth of their personality. It also raises awareness and provides information about education, psychological issues and issues concerning the relationship between children and parents.<sup>238</sup> The purpose of the department is the implementation of policies and the

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<sup>233</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>234</sup> Interview, Department of Social Policy, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 2/06/2016.

<sup>235</sup> Website of the Social Solidarity Network Association of Heraklion, available at:

<http://koinoniaher.gr/kinoniko-iatrio/anakinosi-litourgias/>

<sup>236</sup> Website of the Social Solidarity Network Association of Heraklion, available at:

<http://koinoniaher.gr/kinoniko-iatrio/>

<sup>237</sup> Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at: <http://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/press-releases-2014/egkainia-koinwnikou-pantopwleiou-23122014.html>

<sup>238</sup> Website of Dimotikos Organismos Prosxoliki Agogis , Frontidas Kai Mazikis Athlisis Herakleiou , available at: <http://www.dopafmai.gr/prosxoliki-agogi>

participation in activities and programs that are aimed to support vulnerable groups by providing a variety of health services and counseling.<sup>239</sup>

The majority of migrants' children in several kindergartens in the Municipality of Heraklion are from Albania. In addition, there are many children from Bulgaria and Romania, and in recent years they also have children from Arabic countries.<sup>240</sup> As the head of the Kindergartens mentions "the services are provided to working parents who are inhabitants of the municipality. We cannot accept migrants' children without papers. However, when we have reference from the social services, in these cases, even if their residence permit has expired and the child is in risk, we accept the child in the nursery area."<sup>241</sup>

Last year, the Organization for Early Childhood Education implemented a program that was funded by the European Integration Fund. The program was implemented in the kindergartens of the Municipality of Heraklion during afternoon in the summer season, and it targeted migrants' children. The aim of the project was to promote the interaction of immigrant and native children through specific actions, as well as the participation of their families in intercultural events in the nursery.<sup>242</sup> The main goal of the program was the harmonious coexistence between third country nationals and the host society, the facilitation of the children's access to preschool education and the creation of a meeting point for parents to promote intercultural coexistence.

Insufficient knowledge of Greek language surfaces as the main obstacle in migrants' access to municipal day care services. The Organization for Early Childhood Education does not provide translations of the required documents and the staff tries to help migrants to complete the application form. The head of the Municipal Organization for Early Childhood Education - Care and Mass Sports in Heraklion stressed that "the parents of migrants' children are trying hard to complete the application. My impression is that the needed documents in the end get completed. I am thinking that they may be contact with an agency or an office that helps them fill out the applications. Unfortunately, our department does not provide cultural mediators or translation for the needed documents."<sup>243</sup>

### 5.3.2.2 Employment

The TOPEKO program (Local actions for the social integration of vulnerable groups) involved a number of actions in 2007-2013 that were designed and managed by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Welfare. Their purpose was the activation and mobilization of local actors in order to create jobs for the unemployment and vulnerable groups find employment. The jobs to be created had to reflect the local needs and the potentials of the particular geographical areas where the respective

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<sup>239</sup> Website Dimotikos Organismos Proxoliki Agogis , Frontidas Kai Mazikis Athlisis Herakleiou , available at: <http://www.dopafmai.gr/proxoliki-agogi>

<sup>240</sup> Interview, Human Resource in the Department of Kindergartens, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>241</sup> Interview, Human Resource in the Department of Kindergartens, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>242</sup> Interview, Human Resource in the Department of Kindergartens, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

<sup>243</sup> Interview, Human Resource in the Department of Kindergartens, Municipality of Heraklion, Heraklion, 31/05/2016.

program was implemented.<sup>244</sup> A special characteristic of the implemented actions was the establishment of a Development Partnership between public and private actors in every local action plan in a given geographical area. The actions aimed to prepare the unemployed beneficiaries to take up a new job, to generate a new job position, and to maintain it for at least for three months.<sup>245</sup> In the establishment of the Development Partnership "Channel to Employment in the Municipality of Heraklion" the municipal authorities cooperated with several local bodies, and had as coordinating partner the Center for Vocational Training of Crete.

In 2012, the Development Partnership "Channel to Employment in the Municipality of Heraklion" implemented local social inclusion actions for vulnerable groups. The relevant program aimed to prepare and promote 100 beneficiaries to find employment, gain work experience or start a business. It provided counseling, subsidized training, and helped to find employment. The program aimed at vulnerable social groups and in particular to persons in poverty, people with mental disabilities, immigrants/refugees, returnees and people who were under the status of "asylum seeker", former users of addictive substances as well as single-parent families.<sup>246</sup> The implemented training programs provided an allowance of 6 euros per hour in the following areas: a) cooking and pastry art Executives (20 persons), b) Formulation and processing of local products (20 people), c) Labor gardens and urban green (20 people), d) Development of entrepreneurship and social economy (20 persons), e) Management training and home of people in need of care (20 people). The program was funded by the European Social Fund under the thematic priority "Full integration of the labor force into an equal opportunities society" of the operational program of 2007-2013.<sup>247</sup>

### 5.3.2.3 Teaching of Greek language

Courses to teach Greek to TCNs are an important tool for the integration of foreigners and immigrants to Greek society, for employment and social inclusion. During the period 2008-2011, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning operated the Educational Project Odysseys "Education of migrants in the Greek language, the Greek history and Greek culture" in a number of cities and towns across the country. The "Odysseus" involved the teaching of the Greek language as a second language, as well as the teaching of Greek history and culture, to Europeans and to TCNs over the age of 16 with legal residence permits.<sup>248</sup> The program aimed at providing the language skills, as well as the social and intercultural competences required for the social inclusion of the participants and their families.<sup>249</sup> The program was also

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<sup>244</sup>Anaptuksiaki Sumpraksi "Diaylos Apasxolisis Dimos Herakleiou" website, available at: [http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el\\_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/](http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/)

<sup>245</sup>Anaptuksiaki Sumpraksi "Diaylos Apasxolisis Dimos Herakleiou" website, available at: [http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el\\_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/](http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/)

<sup>246</sup>Anaptuksiaki Sumpraksi "Diaylos Apasxolisis Dimos Herakleiou" website, available at: [http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el\\_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/](http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/)

<sup>247</sup>Anaptuksiaki Sumpraksi "Diaylos Apasxolisis Dimos Herakleiou" website, available at: [http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el\\_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/](http://topeko.kek-anaptixi-kritis.gr/index.php/el_gr/ti-einai-ta-topeko/)

<sup>248</sup>Geniki Gramateia Dia Biou Mathisis website, available at: <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/press/275--lr-1-r>

<sup>249</sup>Youth & Lifelong Learning Foundation website, available at: <https://www.inedivim.gr/πρωτότυπα/odysseus-education-immigrants-greek-language-greek-history-and-greek-culture?lang=en>

implemented in the Municipality of Heraklion<sup>250</sup>, but we do not have any other data regarding the number of participants and other aspects of it.

In the course of our research, we identified a good practice from the nearby Municipality of Hersonisos where Greek language courses for foreigners and immigrants are offered during the last three years with great success. This program was set up in order to respond to the rising number of foreign residents in the area. With respect to cultural diversity and language differences, the office of social policy of the Municipality of Hersonissos, in cooperation with the Prefectural Committee for Public Education of Heraklion, run a campaign to inform foreigners and immigrants of the wider region about the program and it gathered 50-60 applications.<sup>251</sup> In 2014, two classes for beginners and advanced were created. The students came from different countries of the Balkans, central and north Europe who were permanent residents in the region. The duration of the courses is 5 months (from the end of October to the beginning of April).<sup>252</sup>

#### **5.4 Case study IV: The Municipality of Patras**

The city of Patras with a population of 222,460 people is the capital of the Achaia County. Patras sees itself as being the doorway to Europe and has a history of immigration and integration. As a harbor hub connecting Greece to the Mediterranean it has always had a multi-ethnic environment until present. According to the Greek Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, a total number of 10,315 migrants were registered in March 2016 in Patras almost equally distributed between men and women: 5391 were men and 4941 women. By far, the most sizeable group are the Albanians, followed in much smaller numbers by Ukrainians, Moldovans, and Indians (see Table 18). Out of 10,315 migrants, 1041 were based in the Municipality for employment reasons, 5302 because of family reunification, 69 for study, and the remaining 3903 for “other” factors, which are further broken down on Table 19. The vast majority of those TCNs who have been issued a residence permit under the “other” category have 10-year long residence permit, a permit of indefinite duration, a second generation permit, and have the EU status of long-term migrants (*epi makron diamenontes*) (see Table 19).

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<sup>250</sup>Website of the Municipality of Heraklion, available at :

<http://www.heraklion.gr/ourplace/sylogoi/19-11-10b.html>

<sup>251</sup>Website of the Municipality of Hersonissos, available at:

<http://www.hersonissos.gr/hersonisos/greeks-for-foreigners/teaching-greek.html>

<sup>252</sup>Website of the Municipality of Hersonissos, available at:

<http://www.hersonissos.gr/hersonisos/greeks-for-foreigners/teaching-greek.html>

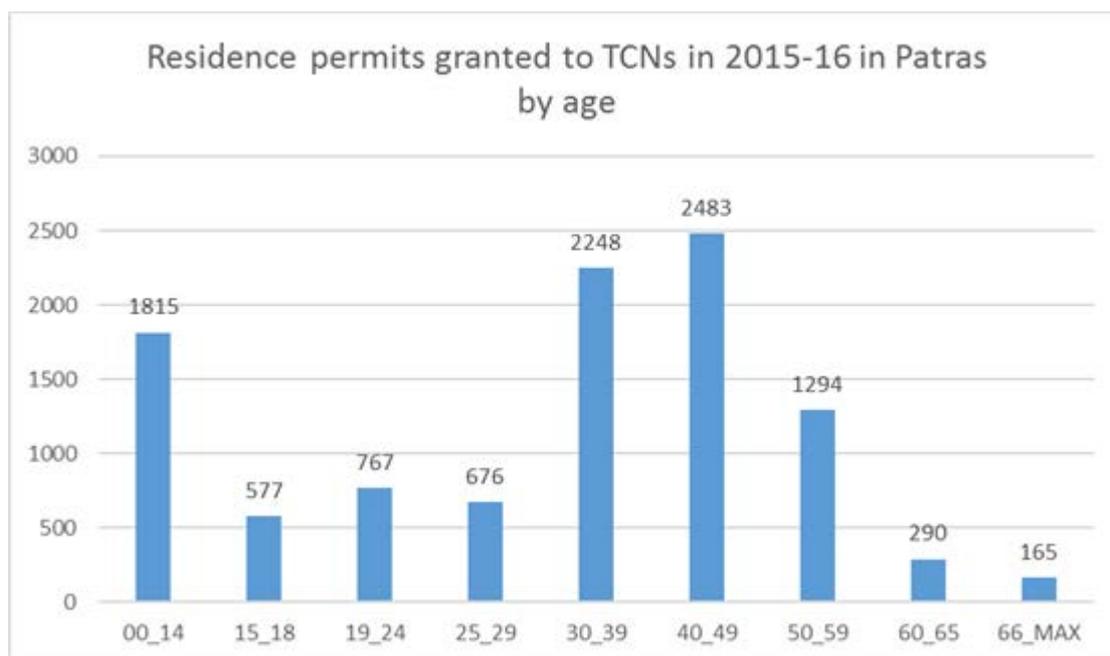
**Table 18: Total number of residence permits issued to migrants in the urban area of Patras by country of origin of migrants, March 2016**

<b>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</b>	<b>PATRAS</b>
EGYPT	50
ALBANIA	8.661
ARMENIA	40
GEORGIA	70
INDIA	267
CHINA	50
MOLDOVA	248
BANGLADESH	10
NIGERIA	30
UKRAINE	337
PAKISTAN	43
RUSSIA	123
SYRIA	9
PHILIPPINES	47
Other	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>10315</b>

*Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.*

Note: This data shows the number of residence permits issued in the entire urban area of Patras and not only in the Municipality of Patras.

**Figure 10: Residence permits granted to TCNs in 2015-2016 in Patra by age**



**Table 19: Type of residence permit issued under the category ‘Other’, March 2016**

Basic categories of residence permits under “Other”	PATRA
TEN- YEAR RESIDENCE PERMIT	2067
SECOND GENERATION RESIDENCE PERMIT	644
INDEFINITE -TERM RESIDENCE PERMIT	260
SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF LEGAL RESIDENCE	195
LONG-TERM RESIDENT PERMIT	407
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	127
<b>TOTAL CORE SUBCATEGORIES</b>	<b>3700</b>
OTHER CATEGORIES	203
<b>TOTAL CATEGORY "OTHER"</b>	<b>3903</b>

Source: Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, March 2016.

Note: This data shows the number of residence permits issued in the entire urban area of Patras and not only in the Municipality of Patras.

From the beginning of 2011 until the end of August 2014 the Municipality of Patras made an explicit commitment to promote migrant integration and intercultural relations. Under the Mayor at the time Mr Ioannis Dimaras - a former PASOK

politician who became independent but was supported by SYRIZA and the Democratic Left in the November 2010 local election - the Municipality decided to engage itself into a debate and dialogue on the integration of migrants and to implement original actions aimed at enhancing multiculturalism. The Municipal Council launched a number of initiatives, allocating a budget for the implementation of its intercultural strategy and action plan (30,000 EUR per year), establishing an official website and issuing a public statement. The intercultural initiatives of the Municipality were financially supported by the 'Enterprise for Planning and Development' (ADEP), a public company aiming at contributing to economic and social growth at the local level.

#### 5.4.1 The Legal-Political Domain

The role of the MIC was of high significance for the integration of migrants from 2011 until 2014 in Patras. Specifically, the Municipality established its own MIC in 2011, which had its own staff to deal with migration issues. It also appointed a Vice-Mayor Maria Andrikopoulou-Rouvali with a clear intercultural mandate, whose portfolio included "Support of Citizens, Volunteerism, Gender Equality and Inclusion of Migrants". Subsequently, she became the president of the Municipality's MIC.<sup>253</sup> The specific aim of the Patras' MIC was to incorporate and encourage migrants to attend and participate in local public life as well as to improve and harmonize relations between the inhabitants and the various municipal bodies and services. The inaugural meeting took place on 22 August 2011 and the last one on 18 July 2014. During the period from August 2011 until July 2014, the Patras' MIC convened 17 times. During the period of its operation, it helped migrants with procedural issues such as permits, licenses and other official documents. Additionally, with the help of the MIC various migrant populations were able to set up a number of local associations which also participated in its organizational structure. In the case of Patras the communities of Afghans, Albanians, Bulgarians, Nigerians, Romanians and Russians were active discussing their day-to-day problems.<sup>254</sup>

The Patras' MIC cooperated with the Municipality in order to obtain national and international funding and to establish important social structures via its collaboration with ADEP.<sup>255</sup> The MIC was keen on implementing European projects, mobilising the business sector and establishing contacts with local authorities for actions to be carried out.<sup>256</sup> The Patras' MIC contributed to forging cooperation between the Municipality and the 'UNHCR, the Red Cross and NGOs such as 'PRAKSIS'. The aim was, inter alia, to create appropriate structures for the reception of unaccompanied minors, including the provision of counseling, with emphasis on those that do not have access to asylum procedures and other protection mechanisms. Other actions of the Patras' MIC from 2011 until 2014 were its participation in the

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<sup>253</sup> Sonetor Project website, 'International Conference on 'Enhancing the Skills and Identity of Cultural Mediators in a multicultural Europe', 9 January 2014, available at: <http://www.sonetor-project.eu/esicm/myfiles/speakers/Cocreation%20and%20inclusion%20tools%20benefiting%20interculturalism%20at%20Patras.pdf> [accessed July 2016].

<sup>254</sup> See for example: Thebest.gr website, 'Patra: Sinedriazei to Simvoulia Entaksis Metanaston', 18 August 2011, available at: <http://www.thebest.gr/news/index/viewStory/84555> [accessed June 2016].

<sup>255</sup> Speech by Maria Andrikopoulou-Rouvali, 'Intercultural Strategy of the Municipality of Patras',

<sup>256</sup> Ibid and also Patrasculture.gr website, 'Patras C4i website Launching event', 12 June 2014, available at: <http://www.patrasculture-c4i.gr/index.php/en/events/14-patras-launching-event-press-release> [accessed June 2016].

consultation on the National Strategy for Social Integration of Third Country Nationals 2012-2015 with comments and observations. It also collaborated with 'Medecins du Monde' and was involved in the distribution of printed material courtesy of the Centre for European Constitutional Law Foundation 'Themistocles Tsatsos' regarding the multilingual guide on preventive health care in order to inform and raise awareness among immigrants.

Additionally, the MIC was a useful tool to strengthen the position of the Municipality at the international level. It did so by supporting international projects such as the 'Intercultural Cities Program' supported by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. This project sought to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. Another one was 'SPARDA' (Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realize the Diversity Advantage) aiming at contributing to the integration of TCN. 'URBACT' and 'SONETOR' (Training of Cultural Mediators Utilizing New Social Networking Software) were additional examples. By carrying out these projects, the Municipality of Patras managed to improve its public image in Brussels and to boost its participation in various fora. Vice-Mayor Maria Andrikopoulou-Rouvali often gave speeches in relevant events.<sup>257</sup>

The Patras' MIC also liaised with MICs of other Greek cities to exchange information and experiences, such as with the one of the Municipality Korydallos. Networking has been created between the two MICs due to their participation in a 'PROGRESS' project coordinated by the National Secretariat of Gender Equality in Greece focusing on migrant women. Emphasis was put on joint interventions, for example in the Greek Ministry of Interior Affairs. Subsequently, a consortium was established between the MIC of Patras and the NGO 'AMKE Support' to assist NGOs Women's Organisation Operation Plan 2007-2013. Specific actions included the providing of food and clothes to migrants who have no economic ability. It concerns 250 migrants three times a week who are given bread donated by bakeries in Patras.<sup>258</sup> The new mayor who succeeded Ioannis Dimaras took a different approach to the immigration issue. Under the term of the new municipal authority that took office in September 2014, no MIC has been established.

The local election of May 2014 saw a policy change in the administration of Patras. Ioannis Dimaras was succeeded by Mayor Costas Peletidis who was supported by the Greek Communist Party (KKE). The political ideology of the new Mayor had a strong impact on the Municipality's MIC operation. Costas Peletidis decided to pursue another policy vis-à-vis migrants irrespective of already established structures in the municipality. It is informed by the Communist Party's assumption that the main divisions and inequalities in a society are based on class, and it is within frame of analysis that the position of migrants is understood. Therefore, the new mayor does not consider the MIC, a migrant-specific body, as an appropriate or useful instrument of action. At the time of writing in the summer of 2016, there was no information or announcement about a possible re-establishment of the MIC. As far as the refugee crisis is concerned, the main position of the Municipality under Costas Peletidis has been that open and public reception centers have to be constructed by the Greek state

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<sup>257</sup> From 19 until 21 March 2013, for example, Maria Andrikopoulou-Rouvali participated and gave a talk at the 24th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Her speech is available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=2052101&Site=COE&direct=true> [accessed June 2016].

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

and particularly the Ministry of the Interior. Subsequently though, he was strongly opposed to the potential creation of refugee camps in Patras.<sup>259</sup>

### 5.4.2 The Social-Economic Domain

Social solidarity and inclusion have been a high priority in the Municipality of Patras. New social structures have been established. These included the ‘Social Grocery’ with expanded services based on the pre-existing ‘Bank of Food’, the ‘Municipal Wardrobe’ that provides books, toys, school supplies, and psychosocial support services. The ‘Providing food’ offers meals to 140 beneficiaries on a daily basis. Another structure that was established was the ‘Time Bank’, an alternative trading system for the exchange of products and services with no use of currency. Finally, the ‘Mediation Office’ provides information to vulnerable groups who seek to access municipal services. Furthermore, social structures included the ‘Municipal Vegetable Gardens’ designed to benefit at least 100 poor families while giving them the possibility of productive activity. According to Maria Andrikopoulou Rouvali beneficiaries include native and foreign originated, regardless religion and nationality.<sup>260</sup> Regarding the access of migrants to the administration and its social services, our interviewees noted that the language barrier is formidable and creates constraints in the day-to-day communication.<sup>261</sup>

The Patras Municipal Social Organization (KODYP) is the largest legal entity of the Municipality following the merging of the Municipal Organization of Health-Providence, the Municipal Children Day Care Centres and the Elderly Centers.<sup>262</sup> Patras Municipal Social Organization also participated in the project NEBSOC (Neighborhood Social Planning and Development) within the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation Program ‘Greece – Italy 2007-2013’. The main objective of the project was to promote social integration through the support of actions which, with the help of new technological tools (GIS), to identify the social disparities of the area and provide specific solutions.<sup>263</sup>

### 5.4.3 The Cultural-Religious Domain

In the field of education, the Municipality of Patras introduced courses for immigrant children within 25 of the typical school programs to provide special educational support for culturally diverse individuals.<sup>264</sup> Furthermore, 194 primary schools offered programs for migrants, refugees, Roma and Muslim students. In order to

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<sup>259</sup> Skai website, ‘Antithetos sti Dimiourgia hot spots o dimos Patras’, 29 February 2016, available at: <http://www.skai.gr/news/greece/article/308460/adithetos-stin-dimiourgia-hot-spot-o-dimos-tis-patras/> [accessed June 2016].

<sup>260</sup> International Conference on ‘Enhancing the Skills and Identity of Cultural Mediators in a multicultural Europe’ (ESI-CM 2014), 08 & 09 January 2014, Patras, Greece, available at: <http://www.sonetor-project.eu/esicm/myfiles/speakers/Cocreation%20and%20inclusion%20tools%20benefiting%20interculturalism%20at%20Patras.pdf> [accessed July 2016]

<sup>261</sup> Interview with Ms Leta Zagkli, Representative of the Red Cross.

<sup>263</sup> NEBSOC website, available at: <http://www.nebsoc.eu/index.php/en/86-nebsoc/115-municipality-of-patra-and-social-organization-of-municipality-of-patras.html> [accessed August 2016].

<sup>264</sup> Intercultural Cities: Building the Future on Diversity project, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680482a97> [accessed June 2016].

overcome language difficulties the education system had to connect minority families to the school with the support of linguistic mediators. The ‘Achaeco Institute for Adult Education’, dedicated to the education of adults and migrants and offered course in Greek in cooperation with the local Municipality. Last but not least, the ‘Education and Care Centre for Families and Children’ (KEMOP) which is a charitable organization operates in close collaboration with the education system of the Municipality supporting socially vulnerable groups.<sup>265</sup>

In the field of culture, the Municipality of Patras paid much attention to the organization of sport activities as well as to its traditional carnival and helped foreign students to present their culture to local people. Within this framework, the opening-up of school grounds and premises created new open spaces for public contacts among different ethnic communities, playing together and developing intercultural projects within the artistic, musical, theatre spheres of action, sporting events helped migrants to become engaged in new activities. The support of volunteer organizations such Young Artists was critical towards this direction as they recognized that people in a precarious situation have little incentive for civic engagement.<sup>266</sup>

As far as information of public opinion on migration and the life of migrants in Patras is concerned, the Municipality attempted to raise awareness among local citizens. It endeavored to do so by cooperating with local media via the Association of Daily News Editors. The already mentioned ‘SPARDA’ project was also helpful.<sup>267</sup> Specifically, it set up a Media Cultural Workshop disseminating data on migration issues. Another project promoting intercultural mixing by eliminating stereotypes was the ‘Portrait of the City’ organizing photographic exhibitions on different citizens and aspects of life in Patras.<sup>268</sup>

Despite the fact that the Patras’ MIC has not operated since the new Mayor came to power, the level of cooperation between the Municipality under Petelidis and NGOs such as PRAKSIS and Red Cross in migrant-related projects remains satisfactory.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, several initiatives have taken place. From March until June 2015, for instance, 250 prospective teachers (that is to say undergraduate students at the University of Patras) were involved in a research project as part of their multicultural course. They were asked to design, implement and evaluate a campaign to combat prejudices, stereotypes and racist attitudes in workplaces of their choice. The main scope of the project was students to be involved in instructional design activities for early childhood and secondary school environments or other NGOs but also to actively communicate with diverse audiences and negotiate cultural differences through compacting prejudices and stereotypes.<sup>270</sup>

Moreover, local stakeholders of the Municipality joined forces to celebrate the ‘European Week against Racism 2016’ from 16 until 21 March 2016. On that

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<sup>265</sup> Thebest.gr website, ‘Stin Patra Paizoume Mazi’, 7 December 2012, available at: <http://www.thebest.gr/news/index/viewStory/164913> [accessed June 2016].

<sup>266</sup> Intercultural Cities: Building the Future on Diversity project.

<sup>267</sup> Thebest.gr website, ‘Hi Metanastefsi Nomimi hi Paranomi? Thema stis Brikselles’, 18 June 2012, available at: <http://www.thebest.gr/news/index/viewStory/131898> [accessed June 2016].

<sup>268</sup> Intercultural Cities: Building the Future on Diversity project.

<sup>269</sup> Interviews with Dimitris Pelekoudas, Vice-Mayor of the Municipality of Patras, Leta Zagkli, Representative of Red Cross and Georgia Tzanakou, Representative of PRAKSIS.

<sup>270</sup> Council of Europe website, ‘Education for diversity (youth, language support, universities)’, available at: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/enhancing-teachers-intercultural-competence-through-collaborative-learning-> [accessed on June 2016].

occasion, the ‘Park of Educational Activities of Patras’ with the support of the Municipality coordinated a series of events entitled ‘Synergy for Diversity benefiting Democratic values’.<sup>271</sup> The initiative involved various stakeholders from the sectors of education, sports, culture, civil society, creative industry, local government. The program of the week included several events, concerts and theatre performances, interpreted by the participating organizations, local youth, including disabled ones, pupils and students. The associations of migrants presented their culture and heritage, their music and dances, their cuisine and spirits. The activities also included a workshop on creative writing by pupils, as well as a workshop of poetry reading both emphasizing on refugees and migrants stories. All activities were embraced by the Municipality of Patras through a statement of Mayor, Mr Kostas Peletidis emphasizing the need for multifaceted action to combat exclusion and all forms of discrimination based on nationality, color, sex, religion, disability, and living standards.<sup>272</sup>

#### 5.4.4 Discussion

Despite the fact that in the period 2010-2014, the municipal authority of Patras was very active in promoting migrant integration and inter-cultural dialogue through a variety of actions, the results left much to be desired. At least this was what a survey conducted in the frame of the ‘Intercultural Cities Program’, in which the Municipality of Patras participated, showed. A number of European cities that also participated in the program reviewed their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.<sup>273</sup>

The relevant questionnaire included fourteen points, on the basis of which the cities’ intercultural strategy was evaluated. These comprised: commitment, education system, neighborhoods, public services, business and labor market, cultural and civil life policies, public spaces, mediation and conflict resolution, language, media, international outlook, intelligence/competence, welcoming and governance. On the whole, the score rating the achievements of the Patras Municipality in these areas was considerably lower than the sample of the other eleven cities. In the field of commitment, for instance, only 53% of the goals were achieved while the average for the other cities in the sample was 77%. Patras’ education policy achievement was also considerably lower (44%) than the average for the sample of the other cities (59%). Additionally, the Patras’ Municipality public services policy record was rated much lower (5%) than the average for the other cities (46%).<sup>274</sup>

The case study of the Patras Municipality shows the decisive influence for local migrant integration policy that the views and commitments of the elected mayor

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<sup>271</sup> ERT website, ‘Anti-Ratsistiki Vdomada apo to Dimo Patreon’, 15 March 2016, available at: <http://www.ert.gr/antiratsistiki-evdomada-15-eos-23-martiou-apo-to-dimo-patreon/> [accessed on June 2016].

<sup>272</sup> European Action Week against Racism website, ‘Patras, Greece’, available at: <http://weekagainstracism.eu/activities/patras-greece/> [accessed on June 2016].

<sup>273</sup> Patras joined a group of twelve cities, namely Oslo (Norway), Neukölln (Germany), Izhevsk (Udmurt Republic, Russia), Melitopol (Ukraine), Neuchâtel (Switzerland), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Sechenivsky (District of Kyiv, Ukraine), Duisburg (Germany), Mexico City (Mexico), and Lublin (Poland).

<sup>274</sup> ‘Patras: Results of the Intercultural Cities Index’, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802ff6da> [accessed June 2016].

has, and the support that the mayor's views enjoy among the city's municipal council. It is entirely up to the elected municipal authority to establish a MIC, and to pursue an explicit and active migrant integration policy. Even though the Patras' municipal authorities under new mayor who was elected with the support of the Communist Party KKE still launched actions in relation to migrants' cultures, these were fewer. The lack of a MIC is considered an important deficit by migrant communities, who consider the 2011-2014 period as more productive. As they connote in interviews they gave, the level of representation and cooperation with the Municipality of Patras lacks nowadays the systematic character of the MIC period. That is because there is no institutional forum for a regular exchange of views between local authorities and the migrants and policies adapted rather depend on the spontaneous understanding of the situation by the Municipality.<sup>275</sup>

## 6. Concluding observations and discussion of findings

Even though they do not have an explicit mandate to promote the integration of migrants, Greek municipalities de facto influence how favorable or conversely detrimental the local environment is to the prospects of integration. The establishment of the MICs since 2010 became the first local government body specifically aimed to this end. With all their weaknesses and limitations, the formation of the MIC in a municipality signals its intention to promote integration. They also establish a forum where migrant associations can communicate their concerns and interact with other interested actors in the city. If we consider the MIC as the central pillar of local integration policies, the extent to which local government authorities pursue the latter varies across the Greek municipalities. The views and commitments of the elected mayor and the support that these enjoy among the city's municipal council bear a decisive influence and make a difference. It is entirely up to the elected municipal authority to establish a MIC, and to pursue an explicit and active migrant integration policy.

Even though they have significant numbers of legally resident TCNs, the country's two largest municipalities have not developed a coherent integration strategy. The potential for mainstreaming integration priorities horizontally so that they be taken into consideration in the provision of services, in the policy and in the practice of the different departments is significant but not exploited. The rich and regularly updated data about the number and profile of migrants in the country, which is collected by the decentralized administrative departments (*apokentromenes dioikiseis*) is not utilized and processed in order to inform municipal policy and practice. Integration actions have mainly taken place in the frame of short term and disparate projects, implemented by different municipal departments and agencies, and funded by the European Integration Fund. While such projects expend substantial financial resources, their results are not evaluated, monitored and taken into consideration as to inform more appropriate and effective municipal policies and practices.

Regarding the legal-political domain, our research shows that the MICs, an innovative for the Greek context institution, were emaciated from the very beginning because of the suspension of local political rights for TCNs; the latter would have

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<sup>275</sup> Interview with Representative of the Albanian Community (name to be added).

provided the MICs with political weight. As it is though, the MICs have a largely consultative role, and also act as bodies that intervene to resolve particular complaints, and disseminate information to migrant communities. The fact that MICs lack resources and do not have their own budget has frequently been invoked to show how circumscribed they are in implementing integration actions, and to explain why the MICs, at least in the two large cities of Athens and Thessaloniki, have not developed a coherent migrant integration strategy.

A basic limitation in MICs functioning as structures for the representation of migrant communities at the local level is the weak level of organization of most migrant groups. This is particularly pronounced in the smaller cities and municipalities, where migrant associations are non-existent. While they do exist in the large urban centers such as Athens and Thessaloniki, they do not always sustain a level of organization and mobilization, tending to ebb and flow as a result of the shifting will and energies of a few leading individuals, whose activism keeps associations alive. Municipal support in kind (i.e. providing office space) could help migrant organizations sustain themselves. The apparent lack of a strong motivation among migrant communities and their associations to become actively involved in their municipality's MIC is perhaps understandable in so far that it reflects the fact that it is a body without political weight, real voice and decision-making power. Yet, the increasing numbers of TCNs who have acquired Greek nationality, especially among the larger groups such as the Albanians, and who as a result have acquired the right to vote and be elected as result, may in the near future give to MICs a new lease of life. With their vote, naturalized migrants may be able to instill some political influence and vigor through their communities' participation in the MIC.

Despite their limitations, where they operate, the MICs have made a difference and they present an added value for migrants at the local level. They are fora where mobilized and interested migrant communities can voice their concerns, and where they can come together with other non-migrant organizations that work on different aspects of migration and are supportive of integration and diversity. Having a MIC is better than not having one. The ability of the MICs to realize a strong potential as bodies of representation of migrants and key actors in promoting their integration is mainly in the large cities and urban areas where substantial numbers of TCNs reside. We cannot expect MICs in every municipality to assume such a role. In view of this, systematic networking and collaboration of the MICs of all large cities and towns (partly happening but in the frame of a few projects), perhaps in some form of federation, would help boost their political weight, which otherwise remains fragmented and thus weak.

- *Recommendations:* Despite their lack of budget and of political weight, we suggest that the MICs have not exploited or developed their full potential. As a nodal point for migrants in the municipality and at the local level, they could become more active in seeking
  - a) to generate resources and implement actions with the support of the municipality and NGOs,
  - b) to develop a coherent strategy for migrants integration at the local level,
  - c) to liaise horizontally with different administrative departments in the municipality and to monitor the services that they provide, to support with

their networking among migrants and civil society the policies and the projects that municipal departments implement,

d) to present to the city council with concrete proposals on measures, policies and service provision related to migrants in the municipality, and

e) to build local coalitions with NGOs, associations and other interested actors in matters of local migration policy in order to boost their influence and weight in their efforts to achieve policy objectives in the municipal council.

In the *social-economic domain*, municipal authorities can adopt specific programs or services for migrants, or adapt and render more accessible general health, welfare and other services to migrants and their communities. Municipalities in Greece have a wide range of competencies in the social domain, while their competencies in the sphere of labor and employment is far more limited. They provide an extensive network of social services in the area of social security, health care, food and shelter, and other kinds of assistance, which has substantially grown in the context of the economic crisis since 2010. Legal migrants, asylum applicants and sometimes undocumented migrants (especially if they are also highly vulnerable individuals) are direct beneficiaries of a wide range of social provisions and services in the municipalities under study.

Even though in principle legal migrants have access to social benefits and other services and projects, access is obstructed. Factors such as insufficient knowledge of Greek language, and information not reaching the interested migrants and their communities have been reported to limit access. Generally, migrants' limited knowledge of Greek language is widely reported as a major obstacle in the communication of the municipal authorities with migrants, and in the prospects for integration. Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental norms that in principle apply in the provisions of social services to TCNs. Instances of explicit discrimination by employees are occasionally reported but they are rare, isolated, and not easy to sustain because they are not officially espoused or tolerated.

Even though the municipalities' social departments provide services to a large number of immigrants, integration issues and priorities are not incorporated in their work and in the ways in which they provide their services, implement policies and communicate with migrants. There is no horizontal mainstreaming of integration issues and priorities across the various municipal policies.

Migrants only limitedly participate in projects aimed at providing vocational training, pursuing entrepreneurship or boosting employment opportunities. The causes of limited participation are that the information does not reach migrant communities, and insufficient knowledge of Greek language.

- *Recommendations:*

- a) Local government authorities could designate municipal employees in social service departments and train them so that they become familiar with issues related to migrants and act as mediators.
- b) Train and employ cultural mediators in the provision of health services.
- c) Greater and more systematic efforts to disseminate the information and to translate information in different languages spoken by the main migrant

groups. Establish a migrants information office in the municipality would help overcome some of these information constraints.

- d) The teaching of Greek language should become a key priority of national and local integration policy, and it should be provided on a regular basis.
- e) Projects to boost employment and entrepreneurship should take into consideration the special conditions of migrant communities and adjust their practices in order to reach out to them more effectively.

The *cultural-religious domain* includes policies relating to religious and cultural practices, and generally cultural diversity. This domain is influenced by municipal authorities' attitudes towards religious institutions (i.e. mosques) and practices (ethnic and/or festivals), or towards religious schools. Local cultural policies can also include campaigns to increase the awareness of the local host society to ethnic diversity, and they can emphasize anti-discrimination or conversely the acceptance of pluralism and multiculturalism. In the four municipalities under study, a host of cultural activities are organized and are endorsed and occasionally supported by the municipal authorities. The two municipal authorities of Athens and Thessaloniki have also voiced their public support for the right of minority religions to practice their faith in conditions of freedom and respect, sending a symbolic but significant positive message. Far more emphasis must be given to inter-ethnic relations, putting energies into actions and measures that bring into contact Greeks and migrants around everyday problems.

## ANNEX I - List of interviews

### Municipality of Athens

a/a	Day (time) of the interview	Organisation	Position	Place
1	9/2/2016	ASANTE NGO	President	Athens
2	10/2/2016	Municipality of Athens Migrant Integration Council	President	Athens
3	11/2/2016	Federation of Albanian Associations in Greece	President	Athens
4	12/2/2016	MELISSA NGO	Coordinator, anthropologist	Athens
5	15/2/2016	KYADA City of Athens Homeless Shelter	President	Athens
6	17/2/2016	Municipality of Athens	Vice Mayor for the Child	Athens
7	17/2/2016	Municipality of Athens Directorate of Social Policy and Health Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies	Vice Mayor of Social Policy	Athens
8	17/2/2016	Municipality of Athens Directorate of Social Welfare & Health, Department of Social Policy and Equality Policies	Staff	Athens
9	11/3/2016	KASAPI- Hellas Unity of Filipino Migrants	President of the Philippine Women's Network in Greece	Athens

10	30/3/2016	Athens Development and Destination Management Agency - ADDMA S.A.	-Director of Strategic Development of ADDMA S.A -Head of European Programmes, Head of TOPSA and Topeka -Staff in Social Entrepreneurship i	Athens
11	6/4/2016	Municipality of Athens	President in the 6th Municipal District of Athens	Athens
12	6/4/2016	Municipality of Athens	President in the 7th Municipal District of Athens	Athens
13	7/4/2016	Municipality of Athens	President in the 4th Municipal District of Athens	Athens

#### **Municipality of Thessaloniki**

<b>a/a</b>	<b>Day (time) of the interview</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Place</b>
1	15/02/2016	Municipality of Thessaloniki Directorate of Social Policy and Gender Equality	Head	Thessaloniki
2	15/02/2016	Municipality of Thessaloniki Department of Operational Planning Systems Information & Communication Technologies	Staff	Thessaloniki
3	15/02/2016	Municipality of Thessaloniki Migrant Integration Council	President	Thessaloniki
4	16/02/2016	Greek Association of Human League	President	Thessaloniki
5	16/02/2016	PRAKSIS NGO	Social worker, Coordinator for the projects in Northern Greece	Thessaloniki
6	16/02/2016	Volunteer School of Greek Language "Odysseus"	Teacher, President in the Board of the Voluntary School	Thessaloniki

			Odysseus	
7	17/02/2016	Municipality of Thessaloniki, Department for the Support of Entrepreneurship	Head	Thessaloniki
8	17/02/2016	Albanian Community	Member	Thessaloniki
9	18/02/2016	Directorate of Social Protection and Public Health, Department of Protection and Promotion of Public Health	Administrative staff	Thessaloniki
10	18/02/2016	Directorate of Kindergartens	Head	Thessaloniki
11	18/02/2016	Municipality of Thessaloniki	Authorized alderman on issues for mobilization of citizens	Thessaloniki
12	18/02/2016	Greek Council for Refugees	Social Worker	Thessaloniki
13	18/02/2016	Serbian Community	Representative	Thessaloniki
14	18/02/2016	Senegalese Community	Representative	Thessaloniki

### **Municipality of Heraklion**

<b>a/a</b>	<b>Day (time) of the interview</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Place</b>
1	30/5/2016	Department of Social Policy	Social Worker	Heraklion
2	30/5/2016	Department of Social Policy	Social Worker	Heraklion
3	31/5/2016	Migrant Integration Council	President	Heraklion
4	31/5/2016	Municipality of Heraklion	Vice Mayor of Social Policy	Heraklion
5	31/5/2016	Human Resource in the Department of Kindergartens	Head	Heraklion
6	31/5/2016	Albanian Community	President	Heraklion

7	31/5/2016	Decentralized Administration of Crete	Head	Heraklion
8	1/6/2016	Heraklion Bar Association/Human Rights	Lawyer	Heraklion
9	1/6/2016	Department of Social Development	Head	Heraklion
10	2/6/2016	Labor Center of Crete	Representative	Heraklion
11	2/6/2016	Laboratory of Intercultural Education and Action/TEI of Crete	Scientific associate in MIC, PhD	Heraklion
12	2/6/2016	Cultural Association of Russian Speakers in Crete	Legal Advisor	Heraklion
13	2/6/2016	Lawyer/Member of Hellenic League for Human Rights	Lawyer	Heraklion
14	2/6/2016	Coordinating for the refugees	Member	Heraklion

### Municipality of Patra

a/a	Day (time) of the interview	Organisation, position	Position	Place
1	20/2/2016	Municipality of Patra, Department of Health and Welfare	Psychologist	Patra
2	21/2/2016	Municipal Development Enterprise of Patras AE OTA (ADEP SA)	Head	Patra
3	21/2/2016	The motion for the defense of refugees' and immigrants' rights in Patra	Representative	Patra
4	22/2/2016	Municipality of Patra	Deputy Mayor for Health, Social Policy and Welfare	Patra
5	23/2/2016	EMIGRANTI Association of Albanian Immigrants	Representative	Patra
6	24/2/2016	PRAKSIS	Representative	Patra
7	24/2/2016	Hellenic Red Cross	Coordinator	Patra
8	25/2/2016	Municipal Regional Theater of Patras	Responsible for educational programs	Patra

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