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Migration and Migration Policy in Greece. Critical Review and Policy Recommendations

From an Emigration to an Immigration Country

Mass emigration from Greece can be separated into two phases: the first one took place between the 1890s and the early 20th century, while the second one occurred between 1955 and 1973 and affected more than one million people, nearly 15 per cent of the total population. In addition, during the Greek civil war which took place between 1946 and 1949, about 130,000 people were forced to seek asylum in other countries as political refugees.

Emigration from Greece began diminishing in the mid-1970s. In fact, the National Statistical Service of Greece stopped collecting data on emigration from Greece in 1977 (National Statistical Service of Greece and Lianos, 2003). Net migration started showing positive trends in the 1970s but, until the beginning of the 1990s, the main influx was that of return migrants. In the period between 1971 and 1986, 625,000 emigrants returned to and settled permanently back in Greece. About half of those returning from Germany settled in the area of Macedonia, while those returning from overseas settled mostly in Attica, Peloponnesus and the Aegean islands. Almost half of them (48 per cent) preferred settlement to Greece's two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. Political refugees mostly started repatriating after 1974, and did so increasingly after 1983.

The migration balance started becoming positive for Greece during the 1970s, due to return migration. Immigration started growing as well, however, in the early 1980s, after a small number of Africans, Asians and Poles settled in Greece and started working in construction, agriculture and domestic services. However, their overall number was quite low.

After the collapse of the Central Eastern European communist regimes in 1989, migration to Greece, especially from neighbouring countries such as Albania and Bulgaria, rose dramatically and, soon, during the first half of the 1990s, became massive. Greece's transition to a country of immigration is closely linked to the overall geopolitical changes in Europe and in the Balkan region, the collapse of Communism and the dismantling of labour markets and welfare regimes in Central and southeastern Europe, which created a massive emigration wave to other European countries. The geographic position of the country at the fringes of the EU (then the EEC), its economic growth during the 1980s and its accession to the European Economic Communities (EEC) in 1981 coincided with other factors. These factors included a rise in living standards and in the educational levels of native youths who began refusing seasonal jobs or work in the informal economy, and instead waited for jobs that would match their qualifications and/or be of better pay and higher status. All this created a pool of work available for migrants and led to a demand for a work force to fill these job vacancies at the lower end of the occupational scale. In addition, immigrants seemed to have responded to a demographic deficit in rural areas, which was connected with emigration from those areas. Thus, major push factors from abroad combined with internal developments in the Greek economy and labour market to produce a dramatic change in Greece's demography, society and economy.

The Size and Features of the Immigrant Population in Greece

According to data of the Ministry of Interior, there were 432,000 stay permits in force for non-EU25 citizens on 30 April 2008. In addition, an estimated 250,000 migrants are currently in process by local/regional or national authorities for the issuance or renewal of a permit. Permits that are being processed do not appear in the Ministry of Interior's records or indeed in any records as valid permits. Nonetheless, applicants for the issuance/renewal of a stay permit who have received a blue receipt proving that they submitted a complete application for the issuance/renewal of a stay permit are treated generally by local and state authorities as regular migrants. In effect, they can live their lives *almost* as if they held valid permits.

Greek co-ethnics who are Albanian citizens (*Voreioepirotos*) hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (co-ethnics) (EDTO) issued by the Greek police. EDTO holders are not included in the Ministry of Interior data on aliens. After repeated requests, the Ministry of Interior has released data on the actual number of valid EDTO to date. Their total number is 189,000.

Alongside non-EU citizens and *Voreioepirotos*, we should consider as immigrants in substance even if not in form, co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Republics, generally referred to as *Pontic Greeks* who arrived in Greece in the late 1980s and early 1990s as economic migrants.

Table 1 Immigrant Population in Greece, June 2008

| | Stocks* | % of total population | Source of data |
|--|----------------|------------------------------|--|
| Valid stay permits | 432,000 | 3.93 | Ministry of Interior, valid permits on 30 April 2008 |
| EU citizens with valid stay permits | 54,000 | 0.49 | Ministry of Interior, 30 April 2008 |
| Estimate of stay permits in process | 250,000 | 2.27 | Ministry of Interior, November 07 |
| Co-ethnics holding Special Identity Cards (EDTO) | 189,000 | 1.72 | Ministry of Interior, April 2008 |
| Co-ethnics from former Soviet Union (Greek citizens) | 154,000 | 1.40 | Census of General Secretariat for Repatriated Co-ethnics, 2000 |
| Irregular migrants | 167,000 | 1.52 | Authors' own estimate |
| Total (including co-ethnics) | 1,246,000 | 11.33 | |
| Total (excluding co-ethnics) | 903,000 | 8.21 | |
| Total of legal migrants | 1,075,000 | 9.81 | Including those whose permits are in process |
| Total Population of Greece | 11,000,000 | 100.00 | Census 2001, rounded to the nearest million |

* Rounded to the nearest thousand.

During the period between 2005 and 2007, there were more than 150,000 people apprehended at the Greek sea and land borders. Assuming that the majority of those apprehended 'disappear' into the immigrant networks and informal labour market of Athens and Thessaloniki – despite the deportation orders that they receive – we estimate that there are at least 100,000 irregular aliens who entered Greece after 31.12.2004 and who are most likely still in the country. In addition to those, another 67,000 appear not to have participated in the last regularisation of 2005. Hence, we provisionally estimate that the currently undocumented migrants in Greece number at least 167,000 (see table above).

Table 2: Apprehensions of illegal aliens in Greece

| Year | 2005 | 2006 | 2007* | Entire period |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Apprehended at the sea borders | 4,974 | 9,049 | 9,000 | 23,023 |
| Apprehended at the land borders | 37,867 | 53,556 | 42,980 | 134,403 |
| Apprehended in the inland | 23,510 | 32,634 | 17,865 | 74,009 |
| Total | 66,351 | 95,239 | 69,845 | 231,435 |

Source: Ministry of Interior, Police Command Office, Branch of Security and Order, Aliens' Directorate, 4th department, 15 October 2007.

National Composition of the Immigrant Population

Migrants in Greece come mostly from neighbouring states. More than half of Greece's foreign population comes from Albania. The second largest group is that of the Bulgarians, but their percentage of the total migrant population is considerably smaller.

Table 3. National Composition of the Migration Stock in 2001 and 2008

| Country of Origin | Census 2001 | | Valid Permits April 2008 | | EU Citizens' Valid Permits April 2008 | | All foreigners EU and non-EU 39,539 | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Albania | 438,036 | 57.49% | 274,390 | 63.51% | | | 459,390 ¹ | 68.47 |
| Bulgaria | 35,104 | 4.60% | 18,154 | 4.2% | 11,805 | 21.90% | 29,959 | 4.47 |
| Georgia | 22,875 | 3.00% | 12,825 | 2.96% | | | 12,825 | 1.91 |
| Rumania | 21,994 | 2.88% | 10,574 | 2.44% | 8,775 | 16.28% | 19,349 | 2.88 |
| USA | 18,140 | 2.38% | 1,893 | | | | 1,893 | |
| Russia | 17,535 | 2.30% | 10,564 | 2.44% | | | 10,564 | 1.57 |
| Cyprus | 17,426 | 2.28% | | | 5,592 | 10.37% | 5,592 | 0.83 |
| Ukraine | 13,616 | 1.78% | 17,456 | 4.04% | | | 17,456 | 2.60 |
| UK | 13,196 | 1.73% | | | 6,715 | 12.45% | 6,715 | 1.00 |
| Poland | 12,831 | 1.68% | 876 | 0.20% | 6,922 | 12.84% | 7,798 | 1.16 |
| Germany | 11,806 | 1.54% | | | 4,063 | 7.53% | 4,063 | 0.61 |
| Pakistan | 11,130 | 1.46% | 11,084 | 2.56% | | | 11,084 | 1.65 |
| Australia | 8,767 | 1.15% | | | | | | |
| Turkey | 7,881 | 1.03% | 1,069 | 0.24% | | | 1,069 | 0.16 |
| Egypt | 7,448 | 0.97% | 10,090 | 2.33% | | | 10,090 | 1.50 |
| India | 7,216 | 0.94% | 8,688 | 2.01% | | | 8,688 | 1.29 |
| Philippines | 6,478 | 0.85% | 6,790 | 1.57% | | | 6,790 | 1.01 |
| Italy | 5,825 | 0.76% | | | 2,218 | 4.11% | 2,218 | 0.33 |
| Moldavia | 5,718 | 0.75% | 8,767 | 2.02% | | | 8,767 | 1.31 |
| Syria | 5,552 | 0.72% | 5,586 | 1.29% | | | 5,586 | 0.83 |
| Bangladesh | 4,854 | 0.63% | 3,761 | 0.87% | | | 3,761 | 0.56 |
| OTHER | 68,385 | 8.97% | 29,455 | 6.81% | 7,810 | 18.60% | 37,265 | 5.55 |
| TOTAL | 761,813 | 100.00% | 432,022 | 100.00% | 53,900 | 100.00% | 670,922 | 100.00 |

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001, and Ministry of Interior. Data for 2001 include both regular and undocumented migrants and exclude citizens from the EU 15. Data for 2008 include only legal non-EU immigrants with valid stay permits and EU citizens registered with police authorities (holders of stay permits)

¹ This is the total number of Albanian citizens residing in Greece, including 185,000 co-ethnics holding special identity cards (EDTO).

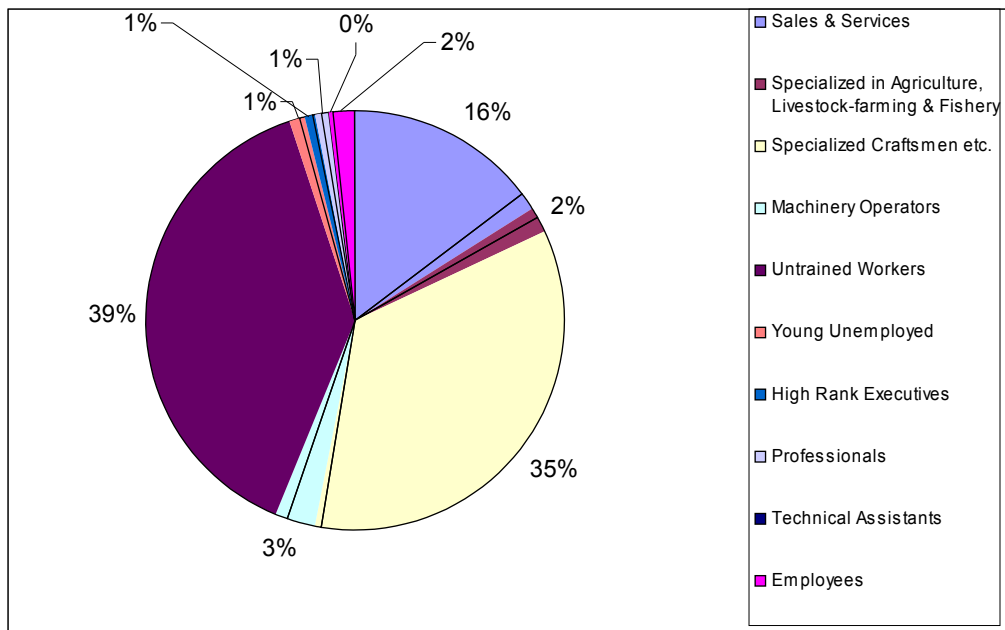
Immigrant Insertion into the Greek Labour Market

The Greek labour market is characterised by high segmentation with special employment niches occupied by migrant workers. The native population's living standards have increased in recent decades, and there is widespread participation in tertiary and higher education. Thus, young Greeks seem to prefer to wait for employment that conforms to their skills, meanwhile remaining financially supported by their families, rather than taking up a low-prestige, low-skill and low-paying job.

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

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

Figure 1: Immigrant Insertion into the Greek Labour Market



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

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

An assessment of migrant insertion into the Greek labour market

A critical overview of studies analysing immigrant insertion into the Greek labour market suggests a mixed picture of the evolution of migrant stocks and their insertion into the labour market. Data on regular migrants suggest that, regardless of nationality, a significant percentage (ranging between two-thirds and three-fourths) of legal immigrants have welfare insurance and hence a regular job. By contrast, estimates based on qualitative fieldwork or on small-scale surveys suggest that there is a large number of people, especially in the numerically smaller communities from non-EU countries, who live and work without documents.

There is a scarcity of data or of earlier studies on the socio-economic and professional mobility of Asian and Eastern European populations. There is only one, largely descriptive study of Asian immigrants in Athens and there is no study, to the best of our knowledge, on Ukrainian or Romanian immigration into Greece. By contrast, there is a wealth of studies on Albanian citizens. These studies suggest that Albanian immigration has largely resulted from illegality to regular employment and legal stay. Their participation in welfare schemes has increased and they have achieved upward socio-economic and professional mobility. This is particularly the case of Albanian men, while Albanian women appear trapped in the three-C sector (cleaning, catering and care-giving), with mainly informal employment conditions.

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

Overall, the data obtained from the National Welfare Institute (IKA) on wage labourers show a significant inequality between the wages of different nationalities. Foreign workers receive wages that are between 30 per cent and 50 per cent lower than those of Greeks for general waged work and services. However, this inequality is significantly lower (between 6 per cent and 15 per cent) when it comes to the construction sector. Also, it is noteworthy that inequality similarly affects citizens of larger immigrant groups who come from neighbouring countries, citizens of Eastern European countries and citizens of Asian countries with no previous cultural or historical ties with Greece. Thus, it appears that discrimination and inequality is structured along the axis of Greek/non-Greek, rather than depending on the specific nationality of the worker. Naturally, this hypothesis needs further testing. In addition, the pattern of wage inequality suggests that in the ethnicised sectors of the labour market such as construction, discrimination and inequality in wages is lower. This is an indication that there is probably a higher need for immigrant work and a better rate of insertion of migrant labourers into these sectors.

The picture is not particularly promising. Immigrants, at least those of the first generation, appear trapped in the low-skilled, low-paying sectors of the labour market.

Greek immigration policies over the past 15 years

Greece did not have a legal framework for controlling and managing migratory inflows until the beginning of the 1990s. The first law attempting to regulate such matters was implemented in 1991. It focused mostly on stricter controls at border areas while making the legal entry and settlement of foreigners who aspired to work in Greece nearly impossible. Despite the severity of the Greek migration law – which, among other things, prohibited any contact between undocumented aliens and public services – the influx continued. The large number of undocumented migrants residing and working in the country (estimated at half a million in the mid-1990s already) led to the first legalisation program, voted on in 1997 and implemented in 1998. More than 370,000 people participated in the first phase of the regularisation programme of 1998.

The first comprehensive migration law was voted on in 2001 (2910/2001), and had two main aims: mid-term management of the phenomenon (including border control, the issuance and renewal of stay and work permits, and matters related to the naturalisation of foreign residents) and implementing a new regularisation programme. Another 360,000 people applied to legalise their status during this programme. In 2005, a new law (3386/2005) was passed in Parliament which simplified the issuance and renewal of stay permits (work permits were abolished) and introduced a third, albeit significantly smaller, regularisation programme

(with approximately 200,000 applicants). The new law provided for the incorporation of European directives on family reunification and the status of long-term residents into national legislation. Finally, since the previous law still suffered from important shortcomings related to the overall processing of applications for new entries and for the renewal of expiring permits, an amendment to this law was passed in February 2007 (law 3536/2007) with the aim of simplifying procedures.

Migration Control

Throughout the last 20 years, a major challenge for migration policy in Greece has been the control of the country's northern land borders and eastern and southeastern sea borders. It took more than a decade, apparently, for Greek authorities to realise that 'you cannot guard a border on your own. You need the cooperation of the other side' (Int.3). In 1998, the Border Guard Force (*Synoriofylaki*) was established. Their aim was to identify, arrest and send back irregular migrants. They operate in prefectures that are near the borders but also in prefectures that receive a large number of illegal immigrants.

In the period between 2003 and 2005, there were approximately 50,000 irregular migrants arrested either at the border or within Greek territory. Numbers have increased since 2005, when there were more than 66,000 arrests, rising further to 95,000 in 2006 and to nearly 70,000 for the first eight months of 2007. However, it is unclear whether the rising numbers reflect a rise in the number of people seeking to cross Greek borders illegally, an increase in the numbers of people who reside in Greece illegally or indeed an intensification of the enforcement efforts of the border guard forces both at the border and within the country. It is worth noting that numbers have increased for all three categories (illegal entries by sea and land and undocumented aliens apprehended within the country).

Greece faces an important challenge as regards irregular migration since its borders are all the external borders of the EU (with the exception of the Greek-Bulgarian border which, as of 2007, became an internal EU border). The country is exposed to two main irregular migration paths: one from Asia, the Middle East and Africa through Turkey to the islands or to the northeastern region of Thrace, and a second path from former Communist countries at the northern Greek border (mainly Albania but also FYROM and Bulgaria). Efforts to combat illegal entries and the enforcement of internal controls have fluctuated over the years. While in the 1990s controls and deportations (mainly of Albanian citizens) were massive, today controls are random or targeted, but to a certain extent selective (probably targeting specific areas or people with a certain stereotypical physical appearance or dress code). There is no concern that such controls may result in the harassment of legal immigrants.

Overall, the philosophy of the enforcement of external controls has changed since the 1990s: Greece does not seek to reinforce its border from the inside but rather to act in cooperation with neighbouring countries that are important sending or transit countries by establishing programmes for seasonal migration and development aid. Perhaps things could improve further if joint control actions took place in the framework of the FRONTEX agency or with the assistance of international organisations like the IOM (International Organisation for Migration). This occurred in the case of Albania and Italy, with the aim effectively combat human smuggling and trafficking and diffusing information to interested migrants about the dangers of illegal border-crossing and undocumented stay/work in Greece.

Unfortunately, there is no purposeful coordination between external and internal border controls and the overall policy for managing migration flows and stocks. Thus, control efforts seem to have been constant, if not increasing, over the years, despite the fact that, during the last ten years, Greece has enacted three regularisation programmes, with nearly a million applicants in total. Regularisations seem to have been unplanned and carried out totally independently from control efforts. One would have expected that, after the repeated regularisations in recent years, there would be a coordinated effort, on one hand, to regulate legal migration and avoid the errors of the past while, on the other hand, to combat irregular migration. However, the two parts of the policy seem to be implemented independently from each other.

Migration management through regularisation programmes and stay permit issuance and renewal

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

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

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

Law 3386/2005 and 3536/2007 sought to rationalise the system of inviting foreign workers to Greece – albeit without success. The invitation procedure is extremely complex and time-consuming. Overall, the meeting of offer and demand through the current invitation system is virtually impossible since the procedure lasts between 12 to 18 months between starting the application and the migrant worker actually coming to Greece to take up the advertised job. The invitation procedure is too ill-defined to respond to the needs of the labour market and becomes completely unrealistic if one considers that the labour market sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed (construction, catering, small factories, retail services) are dominated by small firms that have to adapt flexibly and quickly to the swings of the market.

The lack of flexibility in the invitation system encourages immigrants and employers to pursue irregular migration paths and informal employment agreements. In other words, employers are likely to seek labourers among the legal or irregular migrants who are currently residing in Greece. Or they may as well use their personal networks (acquaintances with migrants who work in Greece or other employers who employ immigrant workers or indeed specialised agencies who bring irregular migrant workers to the country) to invite a foreign worker from her/his country of origin. Even in cases where the network connection was made through these informal networks, and the invitation might be nominal, the invitation procedure does not allow for such requests. Rather, the new immigrant, who is often a relative or a friend of an established migrant, comes to Greece with a counterfeit passport, a tourism visa, an invitation by a relative for family reasons, or with the 'help' of smuggling networks. Once in the country, he takes up the arranged job and waits for the next regularisation programme to obtain legal status.

Securing a permit and a legal job

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

Migrants face important difficulties in securing a contract and welfare payments, given that they are employed in sectors where informal work is the norm even for natives. Sectors like construction, private services within families (care-giving and cleaning) and catering (e.g., as waiters or cleaners in family restaurants, small inns, small cafes) belong to the secondary job market (i.e., that of the three-D jobs). Workers in these sectors often work without a proper contract or welfare contributions. Nonetheless, the issuance and renewal of stay permits for work purposes in Greece is totally premised upon providing proof of legal employment. Since immigrants may have been employed at a number of different jobs during a calendar year, the law specifies that employment is proven by their contributions to the welfare system, by the famous 'welfare stamps' (*ensima*) that prove their days of work. Law 3386/2005 has actually simplified the matter by allowing immigrants who work in construction or domestic service to register on their own with the National Insurance Institute (IKA) at a lower level of contributions (those foreseen to be part-time dependent employees) and hence prove their employment autonomously, without having to produce a contract with a specific employer.

It is very difficult for migrants to obtain and secure a legal job with welfare contributions, which is complicated by how important contributions are for the issuance and renewal of their stay permits. Things are made worse by the short duration of the stay permits and the lengthy process required for their renewal. Until 2002, only one-year permits were the norm. Since then, and especially for immigrants who hold stay permits for dependent employment, things have become slightly simpler since two-year permits have begun being issued. An additional problem is, however, that the process of renewing a permit is particularly lengthy and cumbersome. The bureaucratic requirements, and the documents that need to be produced take a lot of time and energy to obtain. This means that immigrants need to invest a lot of their working time (risking losing their job) or to pay a lawyer or an informal go-between (often a co-national who is well networked with the municipal services) to have their papers processed.

Our study shows that the huge delays still registered in the Greek system for the issuance and renewal of stay permits is due to the following factors: (a) too many services are involved, (b) some archives are not available online, which requires the physical transfer of documents and files between offices, (c) the insufficient training of some of the staff, which is compounded by the fact that both municipalities and regions often work with temporary personnel.

Interior Ministry officers highlight the need for one-stop shops, with employees from all services who would process applications on-site and who would issue permits in the short period of a few weeks. Currently, a delay of 3 months is a positive record associated with the renewal of stay permits for dependent employment in the municipality of Athens, while the processing of stay permits often takes up to a year or more if the slightest complication arises.

Concluding Remarks

Migrants in Greece find themselves in a trap due to the complexity of the stay permits' issuing and renewal processes, as well as the tight connection between their stay and their employment status as proven by their welfare contributions. They paradoxically find themselves at the mercy of exploitative employers because they need the insurance and the stamps to issue/renew their permits – but they often have to pay for these themselves as they are afraid that, if they lose their job, they will also lose their means of subsistence and their welfare registration. At the same time, the short duration of stay permits (they are renewed for one or two years for the first ten years of legal residence in Greece, after which one can apply for a permit of indefinite duration – currently such permits number less than 500) and the long delays of the process put them in a position of semi-legality, since many among them live most of their lives with only the 'blue receipt' proving they submitted a complete application for a permit in question, rather than the permit itself. By the time the permit is issued, they have to apply again because it is nearly expired. Thus, immigrant workers and their families live in a state of legal 'limbo', under constant pressure of securing their welfare stamps to be able to renew (not really) their permit but rather their receipt of application for a permit.

Our study suggests that migration management is fused with migration control in Greece. In effect, the tools of migration management (the regularisation process for undocumented migrants, the invitation for legal migrant labourers and the issuance and renewal of stay permits for work purposes) substitute for ineffective, even if at times harsh, policies and practices of migration control (controls at the border, enforcement of deportations, internal controls). In this context, the notion and principle of 'legality' becomes central to the successful management of migration. Legality, in this context, does not mean abiding by the law, but rather taking part in a network of individuals and institutions which broker 'legality'. They broker the 'papers' that the migrant needs. The migrant has to become part of these networks to achieve this administrative legality which legitimises not the rule of law but rather the 'clientelistic' norms and practices of Greek society.

The impossibility of having a secure legal status by being in possession of a mid-term permit (valid for instance for 5 years) that one actually has in one's hands (rather than the application receipt) and the constant need to prove one's employment through the welfare stamps so that one succeeds in renewing one's permit ultimately becomes a form of controlling legal migration. This system, however, contributes to the creation of irregular migration. Legal migrant workers are under constant pressure by the state and their employers, while their socio-economic rights are also in danger. They frequently fall into illegal status and, since

employers have an interest in exploiting them and the overall migration management system is in a mess, they are able to survive only with undocumented status as exploited workers in the Greek informal economy.

At the same time, the failure of the invitation procedure in regulating economic migration contributes to increasing pressures for irregular border crossings or visa abuse by migrants. The fact that the labour migration management system is not working properly allows those who abuse the duration and purpose of their visas to go relatively unnoticed. At the same time, internal controls do not follow any specific plan apparently, but rather adapt to pressures by local employers in need of foreign workers, such that police forces tolerate their presence even if they are not legal. Our study suggests that the management authorities (Ministry of Interior, department of permits and Ministry of Labour) do not coordinate their efforts with the police and border guard forces (which also belong to the Ministry of Interior) either. There does not seem to be a fluctuation in border controls during or after a regularisation programme, which would confirm the political will of the government in regularising those who are in the country and in controlling illegal entries.

There is also a concern here about the enforcement practices of police and coastguard officers who, in their efforts to extract information about smugglers, appear negligent of the human rights of illegal aliens apprehended at the border. Moreover, it appears that irregular forced returns to the other side of the Greek Turkish border (i.e., to Turkey) also take place along the northeastern and southeastern borders of Greece, probably in an effort to put pressure on Turkey to put into effect the Protocol for Readmission signed with Greece in 2004.

In conclusion, Greek migration policy controls legal migration more than irregular migration. Additionally, it forces irregular migration flows to meet the needs of the domestic labour market rather than holding them in check. This paradoxical blend of management and control policies allows the state to manage migration in ways that are extremely flexible and adaptive to the needs of an economy with important structural imbalances.

The Greek economy is characterised by a small industrial and high tech sector, a limited first sector (agriculture) and an expanded service sector in areas of seasonal (tourism, catering) and informal (cleaning, care-giving) employment. Moreover, its small second sector is dominated by small enterprises of low capital investment which depend on cheap and intensive labour to survive in conditions of increased competition. Migrants coming to integrate into this type of economy become the necessary cheap and flexible labour force that allows for the survival of the primary job market.

Under these circumstances, the question of migrants' rights and migrant integration becomes marginal: the very legal status of migrants continues being insecure and unstable after 5 or even 10 years of residence in the country. In these conditions of post-industrial flexibility and insecurity, integration becomes a 'present' or perhaps a 'prize' that the state and the society of settlement may or may not concede to the newcomers. Naturalisation is 'offered' only to those of ethnic Greek origin, under certain conditions and following a specific 'hierarchy of Greekness'. It is a prize for one's origin and not a quality that one can achieve through her/his social and economic participation in Greek society.

Policy recommendations

In light of the above findings and considerations, we propose the following measures:

- Creation of **one-stop shops** for the processing of stay permits (issuing or renewal) at the local level in the Citizen Service Centres (KEP) that currently exist for Greek citizens. The Foreigner Service Centre (KEA) of the Athens Municipality may serve as a positive example.
- Digitalisation of databases regarding stay permits, penal records, welfare contributions and others, and **insertion into online systems** for the transparent and speedy processing of requests.
- Issuing of **permits with a longer duration**: progressive duplication of their duration: 1 year, 2 years, 4 years and, after a total duration of 5 or more years of legal stay, the issuance of indefinite stay permits.
- **Simplification of the procedure of inviting foreign workers** through:
 - o the issuance of **1-year permits for seeking employment** on the basis of the **sponsoring** of the prospective worker by a citizen or legal resident ('sponsoring' meaning the provision of a return travel ticket, health insurance, accommodation and subsistence).
 - o Every three years, reports that **specific labour market sectors (e.g. agriculture, private care services etc.) that are open to the import of foreign labour** without the need for prior annual reports from the Ministry of Labour). For these sectors, the invitation procedure should be overtly simplified.
- **Reinforcement of local labour inspection offices**, to the added aim of intensifying inspections in specific areas, where informal employment is common among immigrants or natives
- **Information campaigns** among the immigrant population about their **rights and obligations vis-à-vis** the Greek state
- Reinforcement of anti-discrimination measures and the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation to the added aim of ensuring **equal access for regular migrants to social goods and services**
- Reinforcement of **social integration measures aimed at the more vulnerable groups of the migrant population** (e.g., asylum seekers, nationalities with a severe gender imbalance, where people tend to live in overcrowded accommodation and very poor conditions, special measures for migrants and their families working in agriculture as a seasonal job)
- **Simplification of naturalisation policy**, as currently happens for co-ethnics from Albania.

