



Migration in Greece: People, Policies and Practices

Anna Triandafyllidou
ELIAMEP and EUI

With the cooperation of the IRMA Project Research Team, notably Angeliki Dimitriadi, Michaela Marouf, Panos Hatziprokopou, Eda Gemi, Marina Nikolova and Kleopatra Yousef.

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Executive Summary

For most of its contemporary history, Greece was a migrant sending country. Indeed, a brief historical overview of immigration trends into Greece since the twentieth century is limited mainly to inflows from Southeast Europe due to the Balkan wars, to refugees from Asia Minor (approximately 1.4 million in the 1920s and again around 350,000 in the 1950s from Istanbul), and from Egypt. These refugees were principally of Greek origin; as a result they were quickly integrated into the host society, primarily for foreign policy reasons and their impact on Greek economy and commerce was positive. The country's economic underdevelopment did not encourage immigration. On the contrary, Greeks emigrated in significant numbers mainly to northern Europe (Germany, Belgium), the USA and Australia. Emigration, however, came nearly to a halt in the mid to late 1970s after the tightening up of migration regimes in northern Europe. Its EEC/EU accession shortly after (1981) began to change economic conditions and as employment and development opportunities grew, emigration trickled and was mainly limited to student emigration flows.

The geopolitical changes of 1989, quickly converted the country into a host of mainly undocumented immigrants from Southeast Europe, Central-Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and later from South Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Greece's economy, which is characterised by a number of labour intensive sectors (tourism, agriculture, construction) and a vast, deeply-rooted informal economy, offered employment opportunities to increasing numbers of immigrants. Moreover, improved economic conditions (wage increases and general improvement in the country's GDP per capita), as well as changing societal and market needs (such as the increasing number of women entering the labour market and the ageing of Greek society and related growing for home care for elderly parents and children), worked as powerful pull-factors for migrant employment, particularly in undeclared caring and cleaning work.

The sudden increase of immigrant influx was an unexpected phenomenon for both the government and the population. Migration policy was mainly characterised by administrative and political confusion and a rather reluctant need to deal with an over-representation of irregular immigrants working in the informal market across the Greek economy. Since the second half of the 1990s, the main instrument of migration policy has consisted of regularisation measures and an increasing emphasis in border controls. Integration issues (including naturalisation and citizenship acquisition for Greece's growing second-generation of migrants) came to the policy agenda only in the mid-2000s.

The breakout of the Greek economic crisis in 2010 and the subsequent measures of severe austerity dramatically altered the conditions throughout the country and unavoidably deeply impacted the migration landscape. Labour Force Survey Data for the last trimester of 2012 mark overall unemployment at 26%, but the unemployment of third country nationals (TCNs) stands at 38% and that of migrant men from non-EU countries at 40%. Data from the Ministry of Interior database, on valid stay permits, put these at 440,118 (on 31 December 2012), the lowest number in the last decade. The decline in valid stay permits suggests that some migrants may be returning to their countries of origin. However, it is difficult to know how many migrants have actually returned to their countries of origin and how many have stayed in Greece but have lost their legal stay status because they were unable to renew their stay permits once unemployed.

During the last decade and particularly since 2007 Greece has faced important immigration pressures from irregular migrants and asylum seekers from Asia and Africa, reaching Greece via Turkey. While until 2009 the preferred route was to cross the short straits between the Turkish coast and the Greek islands in the Aegean, since then, the routes have changed. The main bulk of the irregular migration and asylum seeking flows have been arriving through the Greek-Turkish land border in the north-eastern corner of Greece across the Evros river. The dynamics of these routes have been largely conditioned by continuing political insecurity and war in several parts of Asia and Africa (e.g. in Afghanistan, Pakistan, but also Somalia and more recently Syria), as well as by extreme climatic phenomena and overall high levels of poverty in other parts of Asia and Africa (e.g. Bangladesh but also west African countries for instance).

Greece is the first country of arrival in Europe for irregular migrants and asylum seekers that are often heading west and north. During the last 3-4 years, the relevant irregular migration and asylum seeking routes through Morocco and Spain, and through Libya and Italy (particularly for sub-Saharan African countries) have been reduced to a trickle (for different reasons each, see Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012 for a detailed discussion and assessment). Thus, the Greek Turkish corridor has absorbed the brunt of these pressures. At the same time, the Greek asylum system had been non-functioning, leaving thousands of people trapped in Greece, without documents, without assistance and without the means to make a living. Even though the European legislation on asylum and notably the Dublin II regulation foresees that asylum applications should be processed in the first safe country of arrival, in this case Greece, several EU member states have stopped sending back asylum seekers to Greece in the last two years, following the decision of the European Court of Human Rights on *M.S.S. vs Belgium & Greece*.

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

This situation caused a political crisis in Greece, as the Conservative government that was in power between 2004 and 2009 played the card of suppressing irregular migration and uncovering “fake” asylum seekers, to appease the uneasy electorate. The same has happened in the last couple of years, first with the socialist government (2009-2011) and later the conservative government (as of summer 2012). Both proclaimed a migration crisis and linked irregular migration and asylum with the problems of the Greek economy and society, seeking to obfuscate that these two phenomena were also caught in the landslide of the overall economic and political crisis.

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

Alongside with this renewed emphasis on migration control, Greek public life has been marked in the last couple of years by a dramatic increase in incidents of racist violence, which have intensified after the 2012 national elections when the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party received 7% of the popular vote and entered Parliament for the first time in its history.

The hesitant steps of opening citizenship to the first and second generation of immigrants living in Greece and integrate them on an equal footing in Greek society and the labour market, have been dramatically overturned by these recent developments. Most importantly, there is still a lack of a proactive migration policy that takes into account the international dynamics of irregular migration and asylum seeking, as well as the internal dynamics of the labour market. This report sets the background against which the IRMA project will study the governance of irregular migration in Greece, at a time of rising global interdependencies.

Keywords: migration, irregular migration, Greece, Xenios Zeus, citizenship, integration, employment, crisis

Migration in Greece: People, Policies and Practices

1. Introduction

For most of its contemporary history, Greece was a migration sender. Indeed, a brief historical overview of immigration trends into Greece since the twentieth century is limited mainly to inflows from Southeast Europe due to the Balkan wars, to refugees from Asia Minor (approximately 1.4 million in the 1920s and again around 350,000 in the 1950s from Istanbul), and from Egypt. These refugees were principally of Greek origin; as a result they were quickly integrated into the host society, primarily for foreign policy reasons and their impact on Greek economy and commerce was positive. The country's economic underdevelopment did not encourage immigration. On the contrary, Greeks emigrated in significant numbers mainly to northern Europe (Germany, Belgium), the USA and Australia. Emigration, however, came nearly to a halt in the mid to late 1970s after the tightening up of migration regimes in northern Europe. Greece's EEC/EU accession shortly after (1981) began to change economic conditions and as employment and development opportunities grew, emigration trickled and was mainly limited to student emigration flows.¹

The geopolitical changes of 1989, quickly converted the country into a host of mainly undocumented immigrants from Southeast Europe, Central-Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and later from South Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Greece's economy, which is characterised by a number of labour intensive sectors (tourism, agriculture, construction) and a vast, deeply-rooted informal economy, offered employment opportunities to increasing numbers of immigrants. Moreover, improved economic conditions (wage increases and general improvement in the country's GDP per capita), as well as changing societal and market needs (such as the increasing number of women entering the labour market and the ageing of Greek society and related growing for home care for elderly parents and children), worked as powerful pull-factors for migrant employment, particularly in undeclared caring and cleaning work.

The sudden increase of immigrant influx was an unexpected phenomenon for both the government and the population. Migration policy was mainly characterised by administrative and political confusion, and a rather reluctant need to deal with an over-representation of irregular immigrants working in conditions of informality across the Greek economy. Since the second half of the 1990s, the main instrument of migration policy has consisted of regularisation measures and an increasing emphasis on border controls. Integration issues (including naturalisation and citizenship acquisition for Greece's growing second-generation of migrants) came to the policy agenda only in the mid-2000s.

The breakout of the Greek economic crisis in 2010 and the subsequent measures of severe austerity dramatically altered the conditions throughout the country and unavoidably deeply impacted the migration landscape. Labour Force Survey Data for the last trimester of 2012 mark overall unemployment at 26% but the unemployment of third country nationals (TCNs) stands at 38% and that of migrant men from non-EU countries at 40%. Data from the Ministry of Interior database on valid stay permits put these at 440,118 (on 31 December 2012), the lowest number in the last decade. The decline in valid stay permits suggests that some migrants may be returning to their countries of origin. However, it is difficult to know how many migrants have actually returned to their countries of origin and how many have stayed in Greece but have lost their legal stay status because they were unable to renew their stay permits once unemployed.

¹ This report borrows on recent work of the author for the OECD International Network of Migration Experts (SOPEMI reports 2010, 2011 and 2012 on Greece, available from the IRMA Project web site <http://irma.eliamep.gr> on the book Triandafyllidou, A. and Maroukis, T. (2010) (eds) *Immigration in 21st Century Greece*, Athens: Kritiki, in Greek and on the chapter Gropas, R. and Triandafyllidou, A. (2013) *Greece*, in A. Triandafyllidou and R. Gropas (eds) *European Immigration: A Sourcebook*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

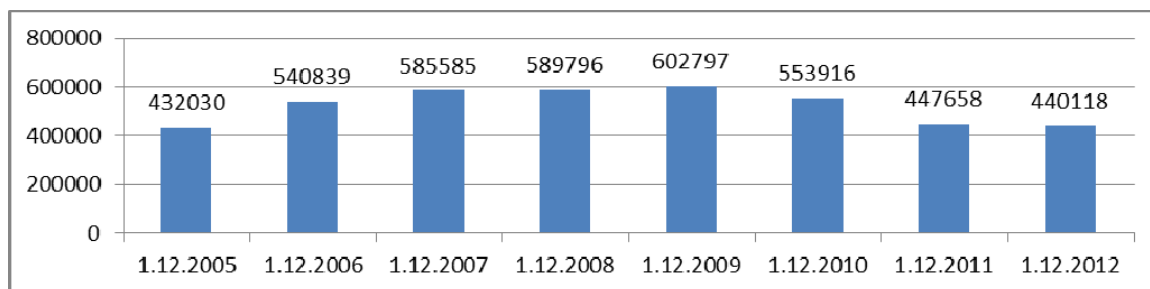
This reports aims at providing an up to date overview of immigration in Greece, the size and main features of the migrant population, and its current employment situation, which is rather bleak. The report reviews the main features of the migration policy currently in force and the related dynamics that it creates in terms of legality or irregular status and informal work, among third country nationals living in Greece. We also discuss recent trends in media discourses and public opinion, as well as the worrying rise of racist violence against migrants in Greek society. The report concludes by outlining the prospects of migration in Greek society in the 2010s, with a special consideration of the dynamics of irregular migration and the best ways to govern it.

2. The Migrant Population in Greece

The main source of data on legally staying third country nationals in Greece is the stay permit database of the Ministry of Interior. Figure 1 and Table 1 below present the legal migrant stock in Greece from January 2005 to December 2012, excluding seasonal migrant workers.

The highest number of legal migrants present in Greece was registered in December 2009, with over 600,000 valid permits. Since then, there is a continuous decrease in the number of valid stay permits, which fell to just over 550,000 at the end of 2010 (553,916 on 1 December 2010) and to an all-time low of 440,000 in December 2012.

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



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

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

There appears to be an increasing trend of Albanian migrants, the most numerous group, to return to their homeland. Different estimates of the people returning have been quoted by Albanian authorities. At a conference in early 2012, the head of the Directorate for the Migrants and Returnees at the Ministry of Labor, Social Issues and Equal Opportunities in Albania estimated that approximately 28,000 had returned since 2010 when the crisis hit hard the Greek economy overall. In a recent report by Top Channel TV, a large quality TV channel in Albania, a journalist claimed that out of half a million Albanians residing in Greece, approximately 15-20% were estimated to have returned to Albania². The same figure, i.e. 15% or approximately 75,000 was quoted in a Reuters report in April 2012³. While precise data are hard to come by, there is clearly a returning trend among Albanian immigrants who have lived in Greece even for a long time. Albanian authorities express concerns however, as the unemployment rate in Albania was 13.4% in 2011 and

² <http://top-channel.tv/artikull.php?id=237328>, second paragraph, last accessed on 27 June 2012.

³ http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-04-06/news/sns-rt-albania-greecemigrants-feature-tv-20120406_1_albanian-migrants-albanian-economy-greece published on 6 April 2012, last accessed on 27 June 2012.

the economy is estimated to have kept growing by 2.5% in 2011, much slower than in previous years but still not in recession as neighbouring Greece. However, it may be too early to have accurate data on this issue (see also Triandafyllidou 2013a; 2013b).

Table I_Stock of Foreign Population, 31 December 2012

	Size of immigrant stock	% of total resident population	Source of data
Total legal immigrant stock	440,118	4.1	Stay permits valid on 31 December 2012, Ministry of Interior database
Irregular immigrants (estimate)	391,000	3.6	Maroukis, T. (2012), Update report Greece, http://irregular-migration.net
Total immigrant stock	831,118	7.7	
Total population of Greece	10,815,197	100.00	National census of 2011, data available at http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/General/resident_population_census2011.xls

Source: Authors' own compilation from various sources, data accessed on 30 March 2013.

The total immigrant stock of third country nationals in Greece is 831,000 people, corresponding to just under 8% of the total resident population in the country (see Table 2). Legal migrants correspond to about 4% of the total population. About 3.5% of the total resident population, or approximately half of the total immigrant population, is estimated to be undocumented. These are either people who have never had a stay permit or who had legal status but did not manage to renew their permits.

There are two groups of Greek citizens who are foreign born and who have naturalized under preferential citizenship acquisition paths – which means they could be considered from a sociological perspective as immigrants (in the sense of facing discrimination in the labour market, ethnic prejudice and exclusion)- and hence do not appear in Table 1 above.

The first group is that of Greek co ethnics from Albania (also known in Greece as *Voreioepiotes*). They hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (co-ethnics) (EDTO) issued by the Greek police and have the same socio-economic rights as Greek citizens. EDTO holders are not included in the database of the Interior Ministry. During the last three years, EDTO holders have been encouraged by the Ministry of Interior to naturalise and many did (see also section below on naturalisations). In addition, the Ministry of Interior has started cross-checking the previously issued Special Identity Cards and hence many were cancelled, as people did not live in Greece any more. The result has been that EDTO identity card holders have been reduced from approx. 197,000 in December 2009 to only 6,509 in December 2011.

The second group is 'returnees' from the former Soviet Republics, generally referred to as *Pontic Greeks*, who arrived in Greece in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They are officially considered as 'returnees' to the 'motherland' even though they or their ancestors had never lived within the boundaries of the modern Greek state. According to the special census, administered by the General Secretariat for Repatriated Co-Ethnics in the year 2000, 155,319 Pontic Greeks had settled in the country and the majority was soon naturalized. More than half of them (about 80,000) came from Georgia, 31,000 came from Kazakhstan, 23,000 from Russia, and about 9,000 from Armenia (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000).

3. Inflows and Outflows of Legal Migrants

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

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

4. Irregular Migration Flows

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

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

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

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

number of apprehensions at the sea border coincided with a shift of migratory routes to the land border of Evros (see further below for the response of the Greek government).

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

Table II_ Apprehensions of irregular migrants, per border, 2007-2012

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

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

** Due to their small numbers, apprehensions in in 2011 and 2012 are most likely included in the rest of the country.*

Source: Greek police data, www.astynomia.gr

Migrants apprehended at the Greek Albanian border are usually returned to Albania; a result of the protocol of cooperation signed between Greece and Albania and the good cooperation of the two countries on this issue. In fact, from 2007-2012 a total of 189,151 have been readmitted for entry through the Northern borders and the majority of those refer to entries from Albania (see Table 3).

Table III_ Greek Requests for Readmission to Greece's northern neighbours (2006-2012)

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

Source: Greek Police, 2013

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

Table IV_ Greek Requests for Readmission towards Turkey (2006-2012)

Greek Readmission Requests				
Year	Requests	Number of persons for readmission	Accepted Readmissions	Realized Readmissions (physical returns)
2006	239	2,251	456	127
2007	491	7,728	1,452	423
2008	1,527	26,516	3,020	230
2009	879	16,123	974	283
2010	295	10,198	1,457	501
2011	276	18,758	1,552	730
2012	292	20,464	823	113
2013	24	436	78	8
TOTAL	5,686	122,437	12,326	3,805

Source: Greek police, 2013

There are many problems in the implementation of the Readmission Protocol with Turkey. Firstly, Turkey tends to accept the return only of third country nationals it shares direct borders with (i.e. Georgia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia). It essentially imposes *de facto* geographical limitations on readmissions, similar to the reservations it retains on the 1951 Convention (also geographically limited). Secondly, according to police data, it tends to delay response to readmission requests, exhausting the time-limit incorporated in the Protocol and thereby cancelling out the readmission process. Despite a joint Greek-Turkish statement (signed on May 2010) to accept about 1,000 readmission requests⁴ per year, this has also not come into effect. The opening of the port of Dikelia (Izmir) to accept readmitted persons, from 2010 to 2012 has also proven ineffective, with physical readmissions of only 17 persons out of 2,144 requested.

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

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

Table V_Apprehensions of irregular migrants in Greece (at the borders and within the country). Five main nationality groups, 2009-2012.

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

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

The number of apprehensions generally indicates not only irregular migration or asylum seeking pressures at the borders of Greece (or the presence of irregular migrants within the country) but also the enforcement efforts of the authorities. Greece has beefed up its border controls during the last five years. In the fall of 2007, the Greek border guard employed 200 new officers in the Aegean sea. In addition FRONTEX has been operating in Greece since 2006 albeit with increasing intensity in the last couple of years. The joint operation POSEIDON has become now the largest FRONTEX operation in the Mediterranean and includes the first time ever deployment of FRONTEX's RABIT (Rapid Border Intervention Teams, 175 officers were sent to the Greek Turkish land border in late October and November 2010 and stayed there until March 2011), Project Attica which operates in the area of voluntary returns, and six long term stationed focal points.

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

Most of the migrants apprehended at the Greek Turkish border are released after a few days or weeks with an expulsion order at hand, asking them to leave the country within 30 days. The majority goes to Athens seeking to find their co-ethnic networks or their smugglers' contacts, aiming at either finding a job and accommodation in Athens (including applying for asylum, especially people coming from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Palestine) or at leaving for Italy and then some other EU country (see also Triandafyllidou and Maroukis 2012).

Standard practices of interception, both at the maritime and the land borders include disembarkation, first aid and health checks, transfer to police station for identity checks (for those without documents) and detention. Detention particularly, is a hotly debated issue in Greece. The country was heavily criticized for its detention facilities on the islands⁵, particularly in Lesbos. It has also been criticized for detaining asylum seekers⁶, a practice which in 2012 not only continued but also was strengthened, through the modification of the Presidential Decree 114/2010 that enables the detention of asylum seekers for 12 months (rather than 3 and under special circumstances 6 months in place until then). This is unlikely to contribute to the efficient processing of asylum claims; it is however seen as a deterrent for asylum applications, since migrants are informed that upon lodging an application they will be detained longer and are thus, discouraged from doing so.

⁵ For the situation at Greek detention centers see ProAsyl (2007), Human Rights Watch (2008), Frontex (September 2011).

⁶ UNHCR (18 October 2012) 'Η κράτηση των αιτούντων άσυλο δεν πρέπει να αποτελεί γενικευμένη πρακτική αλλά εξαιρετικό μέτρο' ('Detention of asylum seekers should not be the norm but the exception'), URL: <http://www.unhcr.gr/nea/artikel/b007e6faf3f8f128db0b7075b5aafe33/ypati-armosteia-i-k.html>, 9/2/2013 in Greek.

On the other hand, it is important to note that apprehension and temporary detention do not lead to effective expulsion/return for Asian and African immigrants, though significant steps have been taken to ensure returns. Returns fall under three categories- forced expulsions, sometimes with police escort, voluntary returns, and assisted returns through the police. Albanian citizens apprehended by the Greek authorities are effectively expelled from the country; however things become difficult in relation to Asian and African nationals who have to first be identified, receive travel documents (this by extension requires cooperation with their respective embassies) and often apply for asylum-according to police data-as means of stalling the deportation order. Police data concerning 2009⁷ show that while 70% of the Albanian citizens apprehended by the Greek authorities are effectively expelled, the relative rate of expulsions executed towards African and Asian countries range between 1.62% (average for African countries) and 2.74% (average of Asian countries).

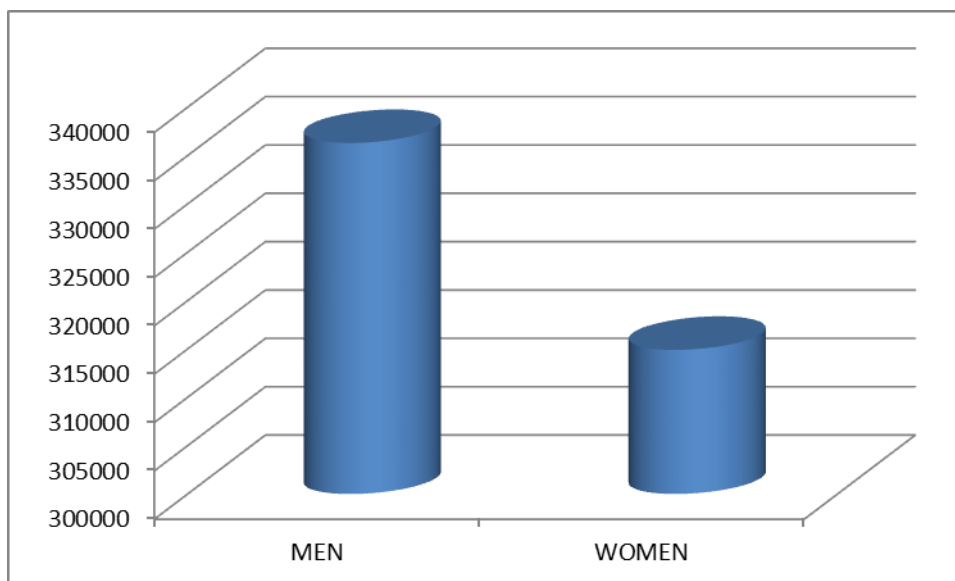
Since 2008, Greece has in total deported (i.e. expelled without consent) 86,934 persons, primarily to Albania but also to countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. In fact, in 2012 alone, Greece returned both voluntarily and forcefully (through police) 11,034 persons, with another 4,759 readmissions,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

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

5. Composition and Features of the Immigrant Population

The gender composition of the migrant population is overall quite uneven – men are much more numerous than women (see figure 3 below). However, this imbalance varies among groups. For instance, nationalities like Ukrainians or Georgians include more women than men, while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are primarily men.

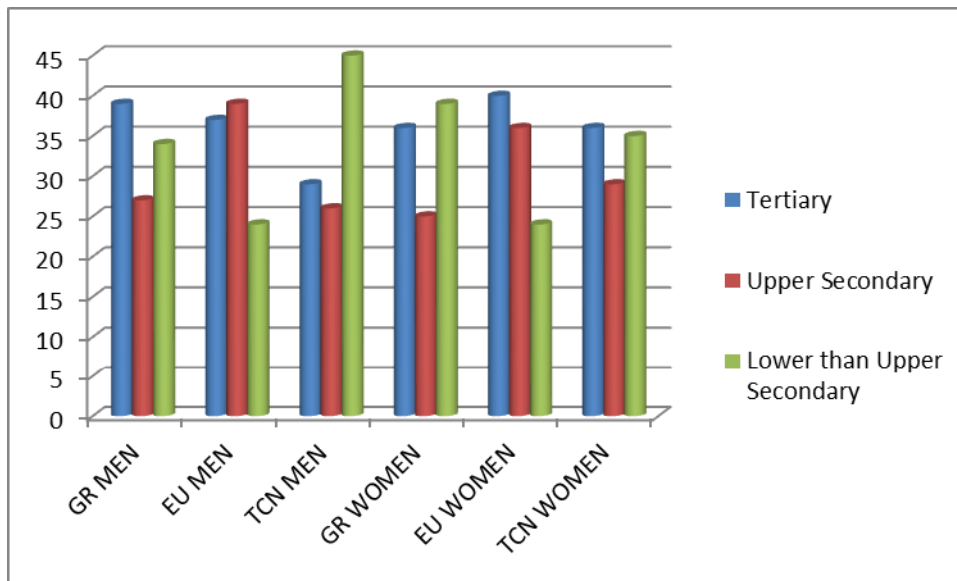
Figure 2_ Gender composition of the migrant population, 2012



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

Regarding the educational level of the migrant population, the educational profile of EU citizens is largely similar to that of natives, as regards primary education. But they include higher shares with secondary or technical education (indeed a type of education that was quite common in Communist countries) and lower proportions who have attended University than natives. By contrast, immigrants from non EU countries are overall less educated than natives or EU citizens, with significantly higher levels who have finished only lower middle school (the obligatory schooling). The percentage of third country nationals with a University diploma is also quite low. Despite these differences in educational qualifications between non-EU migrants (third country nationals, TCNs) and EU citizens, we should note that the sectors of migrant employment in Greece are generally the same for both groups; i.e. construction, agriculture, other low skill jobs, transport services for men and cleaning, caring, catering, tourism for women (See Figure 4 for education by gender and nationality).

Figure 3_ Educational Level by Nationality Group and Gender, 2012 (%)⁸



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

Table 6 below presents the national composition of the migrant population in Greece in 2012, based on the Labour Force Survey data, as well as data from the Ministry of Interior's database on valid stay permits for third country nationals and for intra-EU migrants.

⁸ Refers to persons between 16 and 64 years of age.

Table VI_National Composition of the Migrant Population in 2012

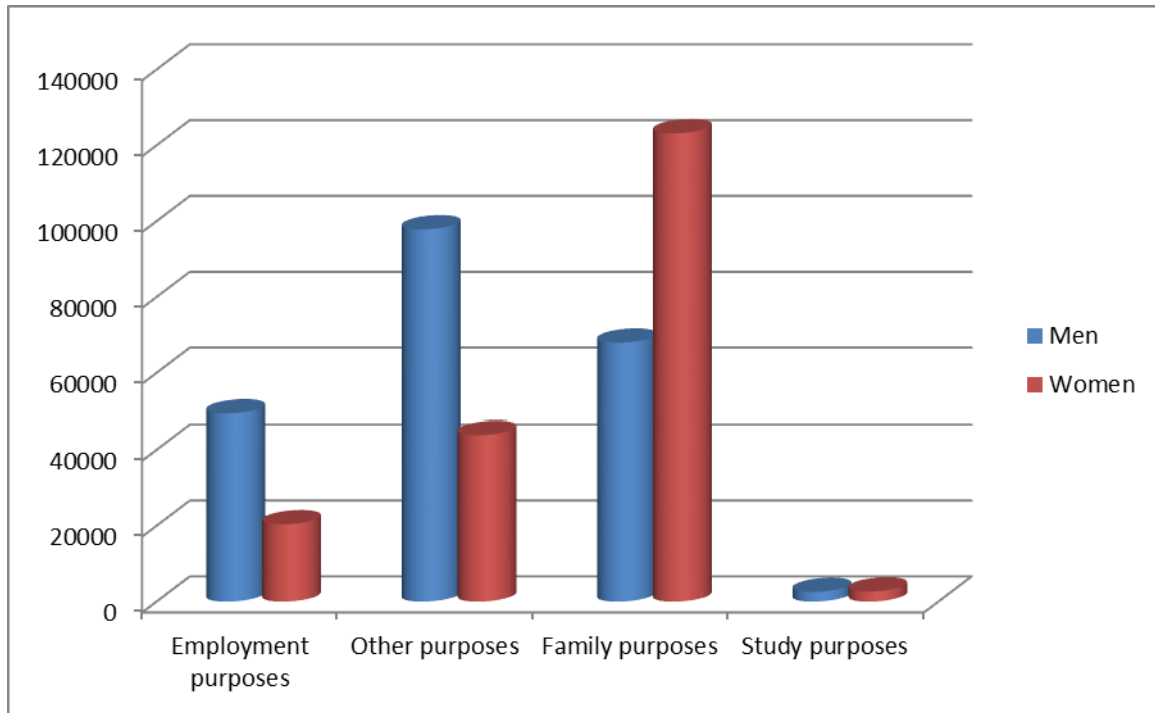
Country of Origin	Labour Force Survey 4 th trimester 2012		TCN valid permits December 2012	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	471,470	59.82%	300,839	68,35%
Bulgaria	38,382	4.87%		
Georgia	23,482	2.97%	13,596	3,09%
Romania	38,469	4.88%		
Pakistan	24,488	3.10%	12,940	2,94%
Russia	15,088	1.91%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

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

About 60 % of Greece's foreign population comes from Albania, while the second largest group are Bulgarian citizens, though their percentage in the total migrant population is considerably smaller. Georgians and Romanians are the third and fourth largest communities (see Table 6 above). It is worth noting though that it is likely that the number of Bulgarians and Romanians is twice as high than what appears in the table above, since for instance at the end of 2011 there were 72,000 EU citizen valid stay permits for Bulgarian nationals and 55,000 for Romanian nationals. They are, in other words, under-represented in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. In the case of Bulgarians, the relatively large incidence of live-in female domestic workers within this group is another factor, which makes the real size and features of the group invisible to the authorities (Nikolova 2010; Lazarescu 2010).

Concerning the purpose of third country nationals' staying in Greece (see figure 5 below), 45% of the men hold permits of 10-year or indefinite duration, which are included in the 'other category', followed by permits for family reason (31%) and stay permits for employment purposes (23%). In contrast, the vast majority of women hold family reunification permits (65%) followed by 10-year or indefinite duration permits (23%) and employment permits (11%). Student permits are considerably low in number.

Figure 4_ Permits of stay by purpose (on the 31st of December 2012)



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

Regarding the settled population, it is worth noting that at the end of 2012, there were 107,000 persons with a 10-year or indefinite duration stay permit. Long-term permits have increased significantly in the last six years. In total, they were 42% more in 2012 compared to 2011, but still account for only about one quarter of the total legal migrant population (See Table 7 below).

Table VII_ Long-Term Permits Issued, 2007-2012

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

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

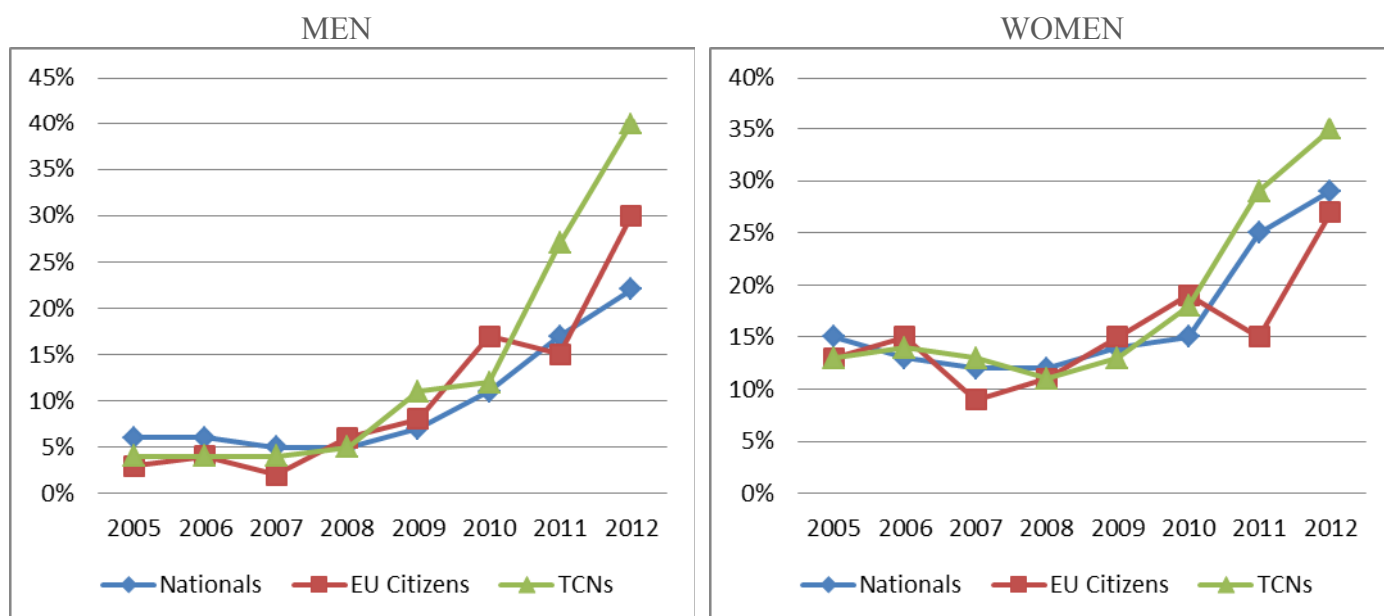
6. Labour Market Participation of Immigrants at Times of Crisis

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

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

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

Figure 5_ Unemployment rates by nationality and gender 2005-2012

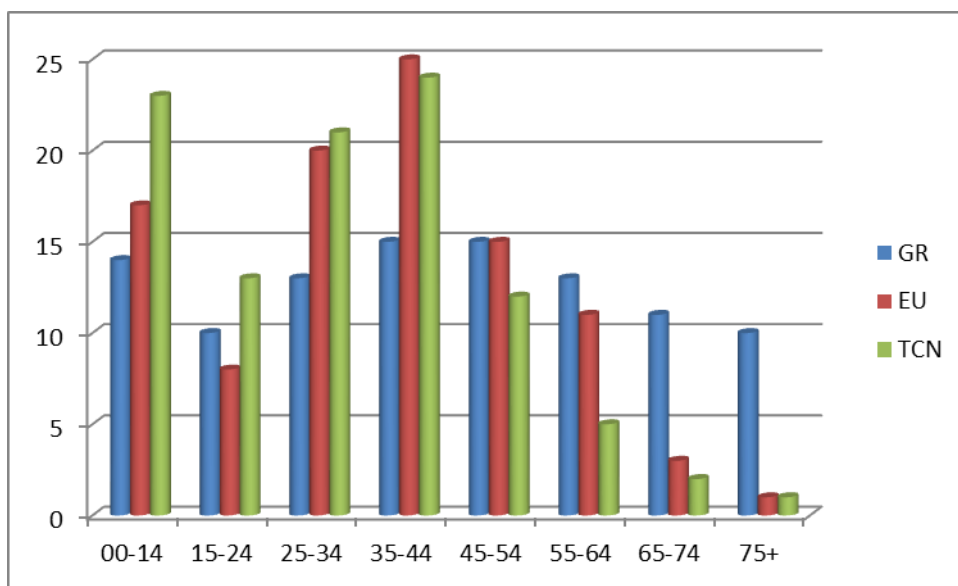


Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), Labour Force Survey, 4th trimester each year, available from www.statistics.gr.

Women with a higher unemployment rate, on average between 11% and 13% in 2009, also reached a worrying 35% (female TCNs) and 27% (female EU citizens). In the case of women, the following observation is necessary; specifically, many migrant women from third countries were working in the informal labour market (e.g. as cleaners or carers without contracts and welfare stamps) and were insured under their husbands' work and welfare fund. This explains the relatively high levels of official unemployment during the period of 2005-2008. What we notice in recent years is that migrant women who had jobs with contracts and insurance are now losing them and their unemployment rate increases.

Looking closer into the unemployment rates by age (see Figure 7), we note that younger people are dramatically affected by unemployment which peaks above 30% for all groups 29 or younger (with the exception of EU nationals in the 25-29 age bracket).

Figure 6_Unemployment rates by nationality group and age, 2012

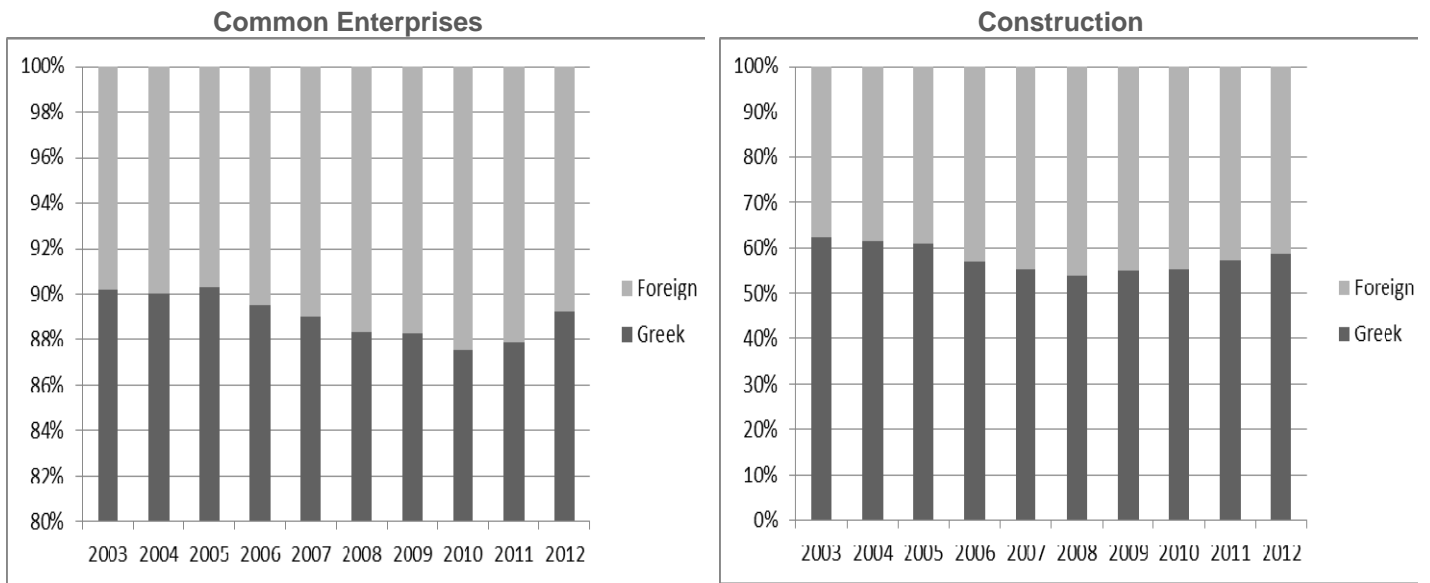


Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, LFS, 4th Trimester 2012

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

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

Figure 7_ Insured Workers by Nationality in Percentages

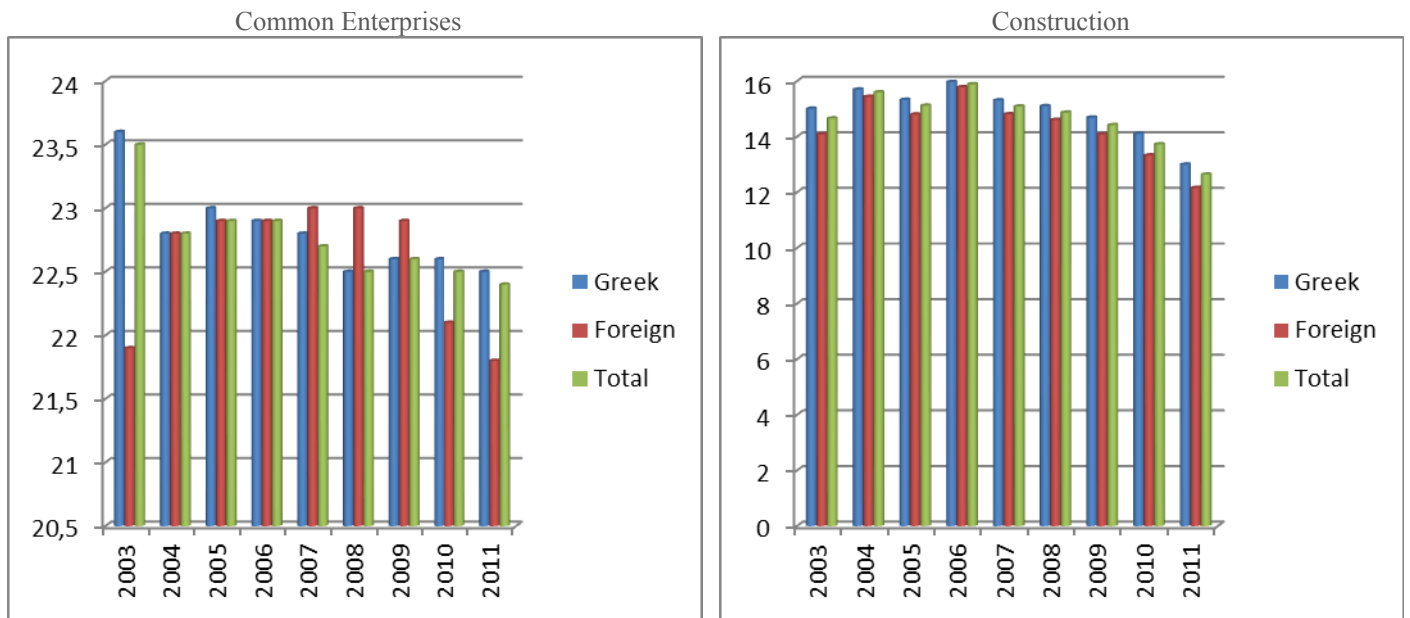


Source: IKA, June 2003-2012, available at www.ika.gr

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Increasing unemployment is complemented by a decrease of working days per month for those employed, which is much more evident in the case of foreign workers in common enterprises (see figure 9 below, data are available only until 2011).

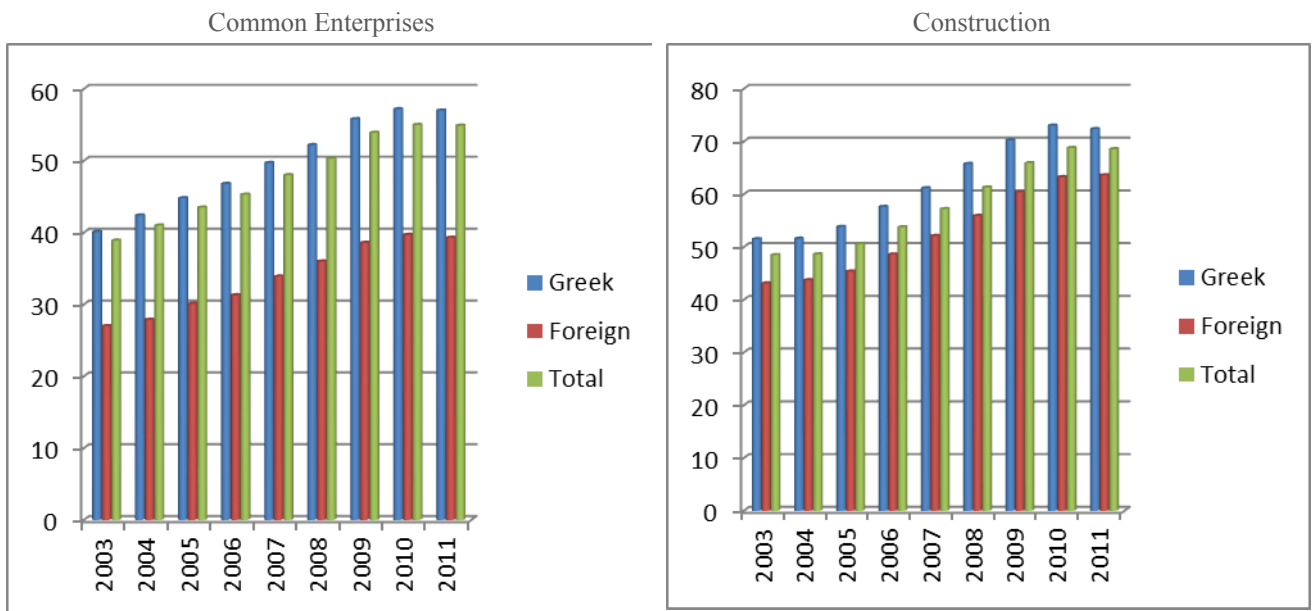
Figure 8_ Days of employment per month



Source: IKA, June 2003-2011, available at www.ika.gr

Overall, the data obtained from IKA in 2011 on waged labourers show a significant inequality between the wages of different nationalities (See figure 10 below). Foreign workers receive wages that are approximately 30% lower than those of natives for general waged work and services. However, this inequality is significantly lower (between 6% and 15%) in the construction sector. It is also noteworthy that inequality similarly affects citizens of larger immigrant groups who come from neighbouring countries, citizens of Eastern European countries and citizens of Asian countries with no previous cultural or historical ties to Greece (Triandafyllidou and Maroufouf 2008). 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. Additionally, the pattern of wage inequality suggests that in the ethnicised sectors of the labour market, such as construction, discrimination and inequality in wages is lower, showing that there is probably a higher need for immigrant work and a better insertion of migrant labourers into these sectors. Overall, while daily wages increase in parallel until 2010 and then slightly decrease again in parallel in 2011, the gap between the wages of Greek and foreign workers remains quite stable.

Figure 9_ Daily Wages



Source: IKA, June 2003-2011

In summary, it comes as no surprise that the Greek economy is shrinking and that unemployment is on the rise, both for natives and for third country nationals. The employment prospects for both men and women from non EU countries are rather bleak, as they are doubly hit by the crisis. Men suffer because of the crisis in the construction sector, in public works and in transport, which has left them out of work. Women are impacted also, however, as the crisis is now reaching middle class Greek families who begin reducing costs by cutting off cleaning and caring services, usually provided by foreign women. There is a slight, albeit not dramatic, decrease in registered wages according to the Labour Force Survey Data for the fourth trimester of each year up to 2011, however qualitative research (Triandafyllidou 2011: 14) suggests otherwise:

“Both construction workers and cleaning persons or house maids note that daily wages have significantly decreased. As regards male workers, wages at the construction sector have been reduced from 50 Euro plus welfare stamps to 30-40 Euro for a day’s work without insurance (Int. 13,

24 and 26 men from Albania, Int. 16, man from Bulgaria; Int. 40 man from Romania). For sewing work in small manufacturing businesses in northern Greece, Bangladeshi migrants who arrived in Greece during the last year, without papers, receive approximately 400 Euro net, without a contract or welfare contributions for 10-12 hours of work every day for 5 or 6 days a week. Street peddlers (Int. 31, Pakistani man) who are also recent arrivals and undocumented earn even less. They usually earn 2-3 Euros per day by selling flowers or cleaning windows at traffic lights in Athens or Thessalonike, adding up to about 100 Euro per month. Our interviews suggest that newly arrived undocumented migrants from Asia (Pakistan or Bangladesh) go through the same path: they are initially unemployed and supported by fellow nationals that they actually meet in Greece. They then get some contacts and try with street peddling. With some luck and thanks to network contacts from the home countries they eventually manage to get a job in a small textile factory.

For cleaning work the daily wage used to be 40-45 Euro without welfare contributions and now it has gone down to 30 Euro or even less. Live in maids used to work for 800 Euro but now they accept 500 or 600 Euro and feel a lot of insecurity as to whether they can keep their job, or whether they can find a new job if they become unemployed (Int.37 and 38, two women from Bulgaria; Int. 41-44, Georgian women, Int. 45 Ukrainian woman) while for live-out maids working full time for one employer wages also are approximately 600 to 700 Euro (i.e. the equivalent of the minimum net salary)."⁹

There are no studies demonstrating this yet but there is anecdotal evidence that Greeks are going back to tourism and catering jobs that they were previously outsourcing to migrant workers.

Thus, we are noticing an overall significant reduction in the demand for migrant labour in the typical niche sectors – such demand is simply disappearing (in the case of cleaning and caring, being replaced by unpaid domestic work by family members) or being met by native workers (in tourism and catering). However, we have no sufficient qualitative and quantitative evidence on these labour market mechanisms so far.

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

7. Greek Migration Policy: 20 years

Greek migration policies in the 1990s and 2000s have largely been characterized by a reactive approach to irregular migration and informal employment in the country's informal economy. The main legislative measures for normalizing the migration situation have been regularization programmes (three such programmes have been adopted: in 1998, in 2001 and in 2005, a smaller informal amnesty programme has also been introduced in 2007. Integration measures have been mostly on paper but in practice rather minimal.

In the section that follows, we review briefly the migration law currently in force so as to present the contours of the Greek migration policy. We also outline some recent policy developments, which were initially very positive, showing that Greece was prepared to turn the page and enter a new phase in the management of

⁹ The results presented here come from the paper: Triandafyllidou, A. (2011) Migrant Livelihoods during the Greek crisis, presented at the Conference on migration policies in Southern Europe and the Balkans co-organised by the Institute of Strategic and Development Studies – Andreas Papandreu (ISTAME) and the University of Leicester on 19 December 2011. The data presented in the paper refer to interviews conducted with migrants in the spring and summer of 2011.

migration and migrant integration but which recently have been either overturned or largely not implemented, perpetuating thus, the dysfunctional character of Greek migration policy.

7.1. Immigration Law Currently in Force

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

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

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

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

Law 3386/2005 introduces a stay permit for financial investment activities (articles 26-27), which refers to people who are willing to invest a capital of at least 300,000 euros in Greece. The permit for independent economic activity is defined separately (articles 24-25, and requires a minimum investment of 60,000 euros) and so is the residence permit for employees of companies of another EU member or a third country who have moved to Greece for a limited period of time in order to offer specific services within the frameworks of their employment for their company. Moreover, the law determines the condition for issuing residence permits for a series of other categories (such as athletes and trainers, intellectuals and artists, financially independent people, practitioners of known religions, scientific researchers, tour guides, students in Athoniada school in Athos etc.). It is also very important that the new law has special provisions for the protection of human trafficking victims (articles 46-52).

Stay permits issued for study purposes (article 28-29) include a time limitation, the total duration of the study increased by half, plus one year for learning the language. The law indirectly emphasizes the development of

the education sector and vocational training in Greece because it recognizes all the relevant public and private institutions of higher and professional education. In addition, it does not set a maximum yearly limit of residence permits to be issued for this reason. It also establishes the possibility for foreign students to work part-time (article 35).

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

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

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

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

7.2. The Legal Framework for Managing Migration Flows

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

Greece has implemented a series of regularisation programs: the first regularisation programme was enacted in 1998 and there were 370,000 applicants during the first phase, but only 212,000 in the second phase of the programme. The second regularisation programme took place in 2001 with 362,000 applicants, and the third major regularisation took place in 2005-06 with approximately 200,000 applicants. The applicants in each programme partly overlapped since several who failed under the first programme applied during the second,

and, similarly, some who failed to obtain a permit under the regularisation of 2001 re-applied in 2005. It is also noteworthy that many people did not manage to make the transition from the so-called Green Card permit introduced in decrees 357 and 358 of 1997 to the separate stay and work permits of law 2910/2001, and then to the unified stay permit for work purposes of law 3386/2005.

The need for repeated regularisations in Greece is closely related not only to the continuing illegal immigration to the country but also, and to a large extent, to the frequent shifts between legal and illegal status that many immigrants have experienced. This has happened for two main reasons: first, because the procedures foreseen by the law to issue or renew a stay permit are complicated and the procedure cumbersome and second because in Greece there has not yet 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.

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

Since the enactment of the first Greek law that intended to regulate immigration, and more specifically to counteract irregular migration (1975/1991), in 1991, the only way for a foreign worker to acquire a residence permit with the purpose of employment is through invitation (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2007). The Greek policy for labour migration (*metaklisi*), which involves a rather complex procedure, allows immigrants to work in Greece, for a specific employer and for a specific type of work, but only if there is an available position for them which cannot be filled by the Greek labour force or the immigrant labour force that already resides in Greece.

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

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

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

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

It is clear from the above description that the invitation procedure is extremely complex and time-consuming. Actually very few employers in the Athens metropolitan area chose to invite foreign labourers using the procedure outlined above. Stakeholders interviewed in an earlier study (Triandafyllidou and Maroufouf 2008) including the Municipality of Athens, the (then) Department of Stay Permits in the Ministry of Interior, the Confederation of Greek Labourers and with the Ministry of Employment (directorate for seasonal permits) confirm the abject failure of the invitation system for short- or mid-term employment positions.

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

The invitation procedure is ill-crafted to respond to the needs of the labour market and becomes completely unrealistic, if one considers that the labour market sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed (construction, catering, small factories, and retail services) is dominated by small firms that have to adapt flexibly and quickly to the swings of the market. Our fieldwork in 2007-2008 showed that the invitation procedure has given fruit only partially, in the agricultural sector, where seasonal employment is the norm. In northern Greece, where seasonal workers came from across the border with Albania, the FYROM or Bulgaria and only traveled a few hundred kilometers, the invitation procedure had worked relatively well (Triandafyllidou and Maroufouf 2008). Farmers tended to employ the same workers every year, so they made nominal requests for specific workers to the municipality. The needs were roughly the same every year and hence there was no need for labour market tests with OAED that would further delay the procedure. A more recent study though (Maroukis and Gemi 2011) shows that the system of seasonal invitations has also been at times abused by both employers and workers from neighbouring Albania to cater either for other sectors that are seasonal in nature (e.g. construction work or tourism jobs in the islands) or as a way of entering Greece for a longer stay.

7.2.2. Securing a permit and a legal job

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

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

Until 2011, immigrants had to collect 200 daily welfare stamps in each calendar year to have their permit renewed. When regularising their status for the first time, they are allowed to buy these welfare stamps

independently from the IKA or from the Agricultural Insurance Organisation (OGA). However, when renewing their permits they are *normally* not allowed to buy missing stamps. The rationale behind the law here is to oblige the employers to pay welfare contributions to their employees, but it is unfortunately common knowledge that as long as employer inspections and sanctions are scarce, it is usually the workers that pay for the welfare stamps. The regularisation programme introduced by law 3536/2007 in February 2007 aimed at giving a second chance to people who had not managed to collect the necessary 200 welfare stamps through their employers, to buy such stamps for themselves and to avoid falling back to irregular status. Migrant workers' dependence on the welfare stamps for renewing their permits makes them unlikely to protest when employers violate their agreements and pay no over time or no weekend pay, as they are afraid to be laid off and not be able to secure a new job with a proper contract. This practice has been documented by Markova (2007) in the late 1990s and has been the norm also in the 2000s (Triandafyllidou and Maroufouf 2008).

7.3. Policy developments regarding stay permit renewal

It has never been easy for immigrant workers in Greece to find and keep a job in the formal labour market with a proper contract and welfare insurance that would allow them to renew their stay permit when it expires. Things have got worse, during the last year, because of the Greek economic crisis and the continuing downturn in the construction sector that has left many migrant men unemployed. Responding to this situation, the Ministry of Labour announced on 13 January 2011 that they were considering options for lowering the number of welfare stamps (and hence of working days per year) necessary for a migrant to renew her/his stay permit. On 23 May 2011, the then Vice Minister for Migration, Anna Dalara, announced that they were considering for an ad hoc regularization of migrants who are employed. However, no regularization programme was passed and Vice Minister Anna Dalara was released of her duties in June 2011 after a government re-shufflement. However, in the summer of 2011 the Ministry of Labour issued a Ministerial decision¹⁰ which brought the number of necessary welfare stamps for stay permit renewal down to 120 welfare stamps per year or 240 stamps per 2 years.

During the same period, law 4018/2011 introduced a new system for the management of issuing and renewing TCN's stay permits, creating one-stop-shops across the country that will replace the local (municipal) and regional centers operating until now. In the previous system, migrants had to submit their applications for issuing/renewing a stay permit at the municipal offices that received all the documentation and transferred it to the prefectural/regional offices that processed the applications and issued the permits. There was a lot of time lost and energy wasted in these transfers back and forth between municipalities and regional offices and many errors committed, due to the fact that most of these services functioned with temporary contract workers. It is unclear if this new system has brought improvements in the handling of stay permit renewals. While the initiative is positive, it is most likely that the system suffers from staff shortages, as most employees working in the prefectural immigration offices were under short term contracts that have not been renewed after 2011.

In addition, the voucher system (*εργόσημα*) was introduced in September 2011 with the aim of tackling uninsured work in the field of domestic and care work. Payments for domestic services, and a few other sectors, can be made through vouchers, which can be purchased by the employer at post offices and a number of banks. The amount of the voucher includes the employee's social security contributions, which are deducted when the employee cashes the voucher.¹¹ The results of this new system appear to be rather disappointing. One of the concerns that arise is the fact that it can only be used by immigrants holding residence permits (Maroufouf, 2013). In addition, according to the Minister of Employment Ioannis Vroutsis,

¹⁰ Ministerial Decision: K.Y.A. 15055/546/10.8.2011

¹¹ IKA, Circular nr: 68 with reference to Law 3863/2010 & Law 3996/2011

ever since this system has been in effect the revenues from social security contributions linked to domestic work have dropped from 4 to 2 million Euros annually.¹²

Law 3907/2011¹³ voted by Greek Parliament in January 2011 opens the possibility of regularization for irregular migrants or rejected asylum seekers who can prove that they have been living in Greece for the past 12 years (article 44). This provision modifies the already existing possibility of issuing stay permits for humanitarian reasons (article 44 of law 3386/2005). Permits issued under the new law in 2011 were 1,150, i.e. about 50% less than in 2010 and previous years¹⁴ when such permits were approx. 2,000 per year.¹⁵ People who receive this type of permit (of initial annual or 2 year duration, then renewed every 2 years) are allowed to work as dependent employees. They are also allowed to work as self employed, if they held in the past a self-employment stay permit

Lastly, irregular migrants for whom there is an expulsion decision but the expulsion of whom is not possible either because of their health situation or because their identity cannot be established, and hence they cannot be removed, receive provisional stay permits of six month duration, renewable. During the waiting period, the Greek state has an obligation to provide for decent accommodation and living conditions. If the state is not able to provide such conditions, the third country nationals in question are allowed to work as dependent employees. There have been approximately 1,700 such stay permits issued in total during the period 2011 until May 2012 (data provided by the Greek police). However, the ministerial decision allowing holders of these permits to work has not been issued yet.

8. Migrant Integration: Recent Policy Developments and their Impact

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

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

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

¹² KATHIMERINI, 20/03/2013, available from: http://portal.kathimerini.gr/4Dcqi/4dcgi/_w_articles_kathbreak_1_20/03/2013_488842

¹³ Entitled: Creation of an Asylum Office and an Office of First Reception, adaptation of Greek legislation to the Directive 2008/115/EC 'concerning the common rules and procedures in the EU member states for the return of illegally residing third country nationals, and other provisions

¹⁴ Data released by the Ministry of Interior in July 2012 in a special report on the impact of the new law on naturalisation on the migration situation in Greece.

¹⁵ The documents required for applying for this status were specified by Ministerial Decision 21879 of 30 August 2011

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

Table VIII_ Acquisition of Greek Citizenship (2000-2012)

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

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

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

Children who were born abroad of foreign parents but who live in Greece and have completed at least six years of schooling in the country may also be naturalized with a simple declaration by their parents, provided again that both parents have been living in Greece legally for at least five years. Citizenship acquisition of migrant children may also make their parents' lives easier since as parents of Greek citizens they are entitled to a five-year renewable permit, regardless of their employment situation.

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

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

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

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

8.2. Other Integration Measures

Facilitating acquisition of the EU long term resident status

Law 3838/2010 has made the EU long term resident status a stepping stone to naturalization. It has, thus, reduced the- up to then- 'exorbitant' fees of 900 euros down to the more 'realistic' but still excessively high, 600 euro fee for the application. In addition, the integration test has been facilitated, as people no longer have to follow the state-sponsored courses that had very few places available, rendering practically the implementation of the long term resident status void. Law 4018/2011 has also facilitated the acquisition of long term EU resident status, as it provides for immigrants that can prove their knowledge of Greek language and history through a written test to skip the specific state-run course, as law 3386/2005 prescribed. This facilitation is important not only for the enhanced status of protection that the long term resident status entails but also because having long term EU resident status is a prerequisite for applying for naturalization under the provisions of the 3838/2010 law on citizenship.

Local Integration Councils

In addition to the above measures, the Socialist government (in power between November 2009 and November 2011) introduced law 3852/3010 (the so-called Kallikratis law), which concerns the reorganization of local and regional governments. This law instructs the creation of Councils for Migrant Integration at the municipal level. These councils are composed of members of the municipal council and social stakeholders including migrants themselves. They have a consultative character, advising the mayor about issues of concern to the local migrant population. The Athens municipality and other municipalities across the country have created these councils, but naturally it is too early to assess their role and impact on favouring migrant integration and civic participation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While there have not been public opinion surveys in 2011-2012 on migration similar to those reported in table 2.5.1 above, it is worth noting that the far right has experienced a spectacular increase in its electoral force. Two far right parties have emerged in these last 5 years: LAOS (*The People's Orthodox Rally*) is an extreme right wing formation that won 5.6% of the vote in 2009 national elections and 7.1% in the elections for the European Parliament. LAOS has participated in the provisional coalition government formed in November 2011 to deal with the crisis; this further legitimised its position in the Greek political system. In the last two elections (May and June 2012) the party has lost most of its voters, declining to nearly 1%. LAOS has actually been replaced in voters' preferences by a more extremist group: *Golden Dawn*. The latter is a nationalist far right party, whose members have been repeatedly accused of carrying out hate crimes against immigrants, political opponents and ethnic minorities. Golden Dawn, with a clear racist and Nazi political position, operates in 'troubled' urban areas proclaiming to offer security to residents, while violently attacking and terrifying immigrants and refugees. Golden Dawn gained one seat in the Athens municipal council (winning 5.3 % of the local vote) in November 2010 for the first time in its history and gathered nearly 7% of the national vote (in two consecutive national elections on 6 May and 17 June 2012) electing thus 21 members in Parliament (again it is the first time that the party enters Parliament). For both parties, migration has been a priority issue and their electoral agenda and influence was highly related to their anti-immigrant and overtly racist discourse.

Since 2009, there has been a rise of hate speech that goes unaccountable, voiced by more or less extremist right wing social and political actors. A recent unofficial report initiated by the UNHCR branch in Greece has registered some 63 self-reported incidents of racist violent attacks. In 18 of those there were police officers involved as perpetrators. Interestingly, also in 18 cases, the perpetrators were simple citizens and not members of extremist right wing groups. In fact, there have been recent reports by journalists which suggest that many police people are active Golden Dawn supporters.¹⁶

¹⁶

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

and

10. Concluding Remarks

Irregularity and instability remain two of the main ingredients of the Greek migration management model. After 20 years of experience as a host, Greece has yet to design and implement legal migration channels for third country nationals and a viable system of management for immigrants who are already in the country. Such insecurity and instability has hit particularly hard long term settled migrants, in the context of the current economic crisis. Unable to find work many see their stay permits and their 10 or more years stay in Greece evaporate into thin air, falling to the status of irregular migrants.

The recent citizenship law that was expected to radically change the prospects of the second generation and to a large extent the prospects also of their parents is yet to take off the ground. Part of the reason is that migrant families cannot afford the 900 Euro per person fee at this difficult time, even if they generally fulfill the requirements. The same is probably true for the long term resident status, whose fee has been lowered to 600 Euro per person-still a substantial amount for a migrant family that is striving to make ends meet in the current crisis context. In addition, the law is currently under review by the present government, with the aim of making it more difficult for people to naturalise.

Unemployment has hit hard migrants from third countries in particular, both men and women. Many Albanian migrants are heading back to Albania looking for a better future there. Migrant integration in the Greek labour market and overall public attitudes towards migration are currently heavily influenced by the acute economic and political crisis that Greece is going through. The spectacular rise of the far right is particularly worrying and even though their racist discourse and violent attacks mainly target Asian and African migrants, they certainly do not make long term migrants from Southeastern and Eastern Europe feel comfortable or welcome either.

Migrants are seen now more than ever as competitors for scarce resources (like a recent row in Parliament over how many migrant children attend municipal kindergartens prove) and even scarcer jobs. Actually, the rise of racist violence and the increasing ethnic prejudice and overt racism expressed in public and political discourse is particularly worrying and needs to be addressed with concrete policy measures. Such measures should include:

- Ensuring that migrant families do not (continue to) fall into irregularity because of unemployment of the main breadwinner of the family (usually the husband). It is suggested that stay permits for those who live in Greece for 5 years or more are decoupled from proof of employment and welfare stamps. A stay permit of 1-year duration should be introduced for those who have been in Greece for less than 5 years.
- While regular labour market inspections would normally be necessary in order to reduce informal employment, welfare payment evasion and exploitation of migrant (as well as non migrant) workers, it may be counter-productive to embark into an intensive labour control campaign during a period of acute recession and steeply rising unemployment.
- It is also advisable that the Greek citizenship law remains as is and is not reformed in a more restrictive direction. The data available show that there has been no abuse of the law or any massive naturalisation that could be source of concern.

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