



# Ukrainian Migration in Greece: There and Back Again and Straight Ahead for One More Time

Marina Nikolova

Deliverable 2.1  
Background Report: Migration System 2 (Ukraine)



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Βασ. Σοφίας 49, 106 76 Αθήνα

Τηλ.: (+30) 210 7257110, Fax: (+30) 210 7257114, e-mail: eliamep@eliamep.gr

url: www.eliamep.gr

Με την επιφύλαξη παντός δικαιώματος

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<sup>1</sup> Title inspired from J.R.R. Tolkien's book "The Hobbit".

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## 1. Introduction

Ukraine is one of the largest countries in Eastern Europe sending immigrants for more than twenty years - since the declaration of its independence in 1991. Greece was among the first European member states to become a host country for Ukrainian migrants. This report is part of the project 'IRMA - Governing Irregular Migration: States, Actors and Intermediaries' and will then focus on how policies affect the decisions and actions of migrating people, in an analysis that considers immigrants and their families as autonomous social actors who interact with government agencies (in countries of destination and origin) and non-state actors, local or transnational.

Ukrainian migration should be seen as part of the migration system of the countries from the former Eastern Block and therefore some of the characteristics of the flows are common to those from other East European countries. In the case of immigration to Greece, a main feature related to the composition of the migrant population concerns the predominance of women, most often inserted in low-status jobs in the field of domestic work, while a much lower number of Ukrainian men have been mostly working in the sector of construction. Regarding their legal status, most Ukrainians are estimated to be holders of stay and work permits, with the exception of a small share of women employed as domestic workers.

The most common way for Ukrainians migrating to Greece was to arrive with a tourist visa, and then overstaying its duration and remaining to work without proper documents. As the debate on the liberalization of the visa regime for Ukrainians nationals travelling to the EU is closely connected to the issue of migration, the present report focuses also on visa policies and their impact on the migratory flows.

An indicative figure for the number of the Ukrainians in Greece became known after the first regularization program in 1998, when a total of 9,821 Ukrainians applied for the first stage of the process, the so-called White card. According to the population census of 2001, the total number of Ukrainian nationals recorded was 13,500 people, while in 2012 some 16,898 Ukrainian citizens were holding a valid residence permit, according to data from the Ministry of Interior.

Ukrainians were one of the most numerous nationalities residing in Greece until 2008, but with the outbreak of the economic crisis in the country migratory patterns entered a new phase, whereby Ukrainian migrants return to their motherland. During the same period, Greece has been receiving migrants from "new" sending countries mainly from Asia and Africa, and consequently the map of migrants nationalities has changed substantially.

This background report presents a review of the literature on Ukrainian migration since the 1990s, an analysis of a number of key informant interviews with relevant actors (community organisations, NGOs and governmental agencies) in both Greece and Ukraine, as well as an account of relevant statistical data. The report is divided in two sections. The first part offers an overview of the different patterns of Ukrainian migration to European countries and the key issues arising from the early 1990s until today. By 1997, emigrants were leaving the country commonly for short periods of time primarily to neighboring countries, for petty trade and seasonal work. Since then, there began a massive outflow of Ukrainians to more distant countries of western and southern Europe for longer periods and largely through irregular patterns of stay and work. The most important themes emerging from the literature review in respect to Ukrainian migration are related to, female mobility patterns, trafficking in women, irregular stay and work, remittances, labour migration in general and migration of highly skilled professionals. The second part of the report focuses on the characteristics of the Ukrainian community in Greece and the way it has been influenced and shaped by the political management of migration in Greece (and above all of the regularization programmes), but also by the economic

environment which prevails in the host country and determines the working conditions, living standards, or the migrants' decision to return back to their native country.

## **1.1 Methodology**

The present analysis of the Ukrainian migration to Greece is based on primary and secondary research, which began in early November 2012. During the initial phase of the research, a review of the academic literature was conducted, including legal documents and reports of various local, national and international organisations. Statistical data were also examined, in relation to the demographic characteristics of Ukrainians in Greece, their labour market situation, etc., which were kindly provided by relevant authorities: the Hellenic Statistical Service (ELSTAT), the Social Insurance Institute (IKA), the Labour Inspectorate, and the Hellenic Police. The analysis of the literature follows the chronological line of the evolution of Ukrainian migratory patterns since the early 1990s towards destinations in European Union member states, Ukraine's neighboring countries and especially to Greece. The focus of the literature review was mainly on issues related to the characteristics of immigrants' flows to the EU and Greece, the changes in the composition of the flows and the reasons for those changes, the migration policies implemented in Ukraine and Greece and their impact on the migratory routes and trajectories. New material coming from the literature has been integrated in the report up until the end of the initial five months of the IRMA research project.

Primary research was conducted in two stages. Initially, relevant state agencies and other organisations were broadly mapped. Eleven such organisations and community associations in total were found to be actively working with Ukrainian migrants in Greece, among which the Ukrainian Embassy in Athens, six migrants' community organisations, two Ukrainian Sunday schools, the Hellenic-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce. Six of the above were contacted for an interview: four communities, one Sunday school and the Ukrainian Embassy.

A similar mapping of organisations in Ukraine identified thirteen organisations actively involved – international organisations, governmental agencies and local NGOs. Original contacts resulted in interviews with representatives of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) branch in Kiev, and latter on with representatives of the Centre for Migrant Advice (CMA) in Ternopil, and the NGO 'Europe without barriers'. Requests for interview sent via e-mail, fax or phone calls were made repeatedly to ten more organisations in Ukraine, without any response yet.

## **2. Ukrainian Migration to European countries**

Contemporary Ukrainian migration begins in the early 1990s, and intensifies after the country's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In order to comprehend the patterns and causes of migration within the framework of the Ukrainian reality, the report will begin with a brief description of the geographical location, political and economic developments in the country during the last twenty years or so, and the demographic and ethno-cultural characteristics of its population.

## 2.1. A short profile of Ukraine

In order to place Ukraine<sup>2</sup> on the migration map of Europe and to understand the characteristics of the flows, this brief introduction sketches the country's geographical location and its recent political and economic history. Ukraine is part of Eastern Europe bordering Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia. It therefore has a strategic location at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and is the second largest European country. The population is approximately 45 million (July 2012), 68.5% residing in the cities (2012) (Statistical Handbook "Resident Population of Ukraine by Sex and Age, as of 1 January 2012 "). Different ethnic groups coexist in the country, while the greater part of them are Ukrainians (77,8%), Russians (17,3%), Belarusians (0,6%), Moldovans (0,5%), Crimean Tatars (0,5%), Bulgarians (0,4%), Hungarians (0,3%), Romansh (0,3%), Poles (0,3%), Jews (0,2%) and others according to the Census 2001 population (CIA World Factbook).

**Map 1. Ukraine's geographical position**



Source: the University of Texas, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>

What is apparent in the literature, and was also confirmed in the interviews with key-informants, the country is its characteristic division, not simply in geographical terms, but also historically, economically and culturally, between Western and Eastern Ukraine. The West was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while Eastern Ukraine had a greater influence from Russia. Historically, some regions of the country for centuries have been under the influence of Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Empire or the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany, and the country has a complicated history of population movements. As a Soviet republic from 1922 to 1991, the country was implementing the migration policy of the USSR, the main goal of which was to mix the different nationalities in the republics, thus creating the "the New Soviet man", as well as to respond to the needs of the economy (Malynovska, 2006, Düvell, 2006, Markov, 2009). As a result, during the Stalinist times, over a million

<sup>2</sup> Source of the map is the University of Texas

Ukrainians were forcedly displaced for political reasons, their private property or land were nationalized, while policies of 'voluntary' migration forced e.g. university graduates to necessarily work in areas far from their homes. During the same period there was an even greater immigration to Ukraine from other Soviet republics.

Ukraine's key economic function was to supply the former Soviet Union with equipment and raw materials for its industry. After the Declaration of Independence in August 1991, the Ukrainian Government liberalized prices and paved the way for privatizations through new legislation, meeting though tough resistance even from government members which delayed the reforms and resulted in backwards steps. Moreover, Ukraine's dependence on Russian energy and the lack of significant structural reforms have made the economy vulnerable to external shocks. In January 2009, Russia halted supplies of natural gas passing through Ukraine due to a dispute about the terms of a new agreement between the two countries for energy supply and transportation. After almost two weeks of embargo during which many European countries were left without natural gas during winter time, resulting to a skyrocketing prices, the prime ministers of Ukraine and Russia managed to sign an agreement for the next ten years. Economic debates internationally thus focus mainly on country's role in the transport of natural gas and its need to implement a program of economic reforms aimed at economic recovery and development. In one way or another, the above are reflected in many ways on the microcosm of Ukrainian immigrants in Greece.

## **2.2. Key trends of Ukrainian migration since the early 1990s**

The migration of Ukrainians at the time of the collapse of the USSR was characterised by three main features: 1) migrations as a result political opposition to the regime, heading primarily to Germany and the U.S. already take place in early 1990s before the Declaration of the Independence in 1991; 2) initial migrations aiming at the improvement of the household's economic situation and immediate gains from short-term overseas trips usually to neighboring countries (Russia, Poland) for petty trade; 3) outflows because of ethnic or cultural origins and return to the homeland, including migration of Ukrainian citizens with Russian ancestry to Russia, Ukrainian Jews to Israel, and Ukrainians hailing from other former Soviet republics who found the opportunity to return. A more general picture of the trends of Ukrainian migration during the last twenty years is provided by Hofmann and Reichel (2011) who suggest the following typology: migration of ethnic minorities (Ukrainians with Russian ancestry, Germans) and Ukrainians professing the Jewish religion; legal and irregular labour migration towards Western European countries; and short term circular migration, whether regular or undocumented, to the Western Europe as well as to neighboring countries.

Since the opening of the borders, the most popular form of migration was short term mobility for petty trade to neighboring countries. Petty trade, according to Malynovska (2004), leads to the fulfillment of the basic purpose of migration, namely the improvement of household's economic situation, while at the same time it does not require long periods of absence from family and home. While, in the early 1990s the majority of emigrants were from urban areas, initially workers who had lost their jobs, and latter on (around the mid-1990s) teachers and doctors, since 1997 onwards most emigrants hail from villages and small towns (Kostiuk, 2010).

It was generally economic conditions in Ukraine that pushed people at the most productive ages to seek employment abroad guided by the hope to ensure a stable income for their families. Among the key factors that pushed the Ukrainians to look for work in other countries since the very beginning of the transitional period were unemployment, low incomes, delays in payments, as well as new legislation that allowed free exit of Ukrainians (Malynovska, 2004). It should be noted that until

January 1993, Ukrainians had to apply for exit visas every time they traveled abroad. The subsequent abolition of the exit visa requirement was a step towards the liberalization of mobility from the repressive policies of the Soviet regime. As for the regions of origin the Ukrainian emigrants, these are the Western parts of the country characterized by high unemployment rates, more specifically cities such as Ivano-Frankovsk, Ternopil, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Volyn, Zhytomyr.

As a general trend, it should be noted that towards the mid 1990s, especially during 1994-1998, Ukrainian emigration intensified, while by the beginning of the new millennium Ukrainians became legally and statistically visible, particularly in southern European countries – such as Portugal, Italy and Greece, where regularization programs were implemented.

Nevertheless, it took some time before migration flows to West European countries were generalized due to the high costs involved, and Ukrainians, as already mentioned, travelled mostly to other former communist countries for petty trade (Weber, 2004). More than a decade since independence, in 2003, some 2-2.5 million Ukrainians according worked legally in Western European countries, but researchers calculated their total number at approximately 5 million (Kostiuk, 2010). Until now, the actual number of Ukrainians living and working abroad can only be roughly estimated. Apart from data on legal migrant stock in each country based on valid residence permits, most Ukrainians especially in the late 1990s and the beginning of 2000s, used to depart on tourist visas for their destinations or stated personal reasons for the trip when applying for a visa, yet they remained to work informally and without stay permits in their destination countries after their visas expired (Baganha, Marques, Gois, 2004).

Migration from Ukraine to West European countries went on after 2001, but not as intensively as in the period 1994-1998 (Pribytkova, 2007), while destinations are now more differentiated e.g. with increases in the number of Ukrainians heading to Italy or the Czech Republic (Hofmann & Reichel, 2011). Among the underlying social factors of migration are employment and opportunities for professional development, quality education, access to health services, etc. (Kizima, 2009), all of which are important particularly for migrating scientists (e.g. doctors). Brain drain is long debated issue in Ukrainian research and will be therefore developed latter in the report. In 2001, 2,000 job-finding agencies were registered in Ukraine, providing services to those looking for a job abroad (Hughes & Denisova, 2003). At the time, many Ukrainians were seeking a way to work abroad either with proper documents and insurance or informally. Within a year - in 1999, approximately 33,000 Ukrainians were sent abroad through such agencies, while during the same year the Labour Inspectorate ceased the operations of 125 such companies (Hughes & Denisova, 2003).

The results of an opinion poll to Ukrainian potential migrants, conducted in 2003 by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences in Ukraine, concluded that those seeking employment in foreign labor markets chose to do so not only because of rising unemployment but also driven by their entrepreneurial skills and ambitions, and motivated by specific needs and values. The typical profile of the potential migrant in 2003 was that of a man, 33-years-old approximately, usually with family, originating from a small town and with secondary education, while a primary motive for seeking work abroad was to find an interesting job (Pribytkova, 2004). The survey also provided evidence that people who tend to emigrate are generally more adaptable and assertive, they search for their place in society, and go “against the tide” by not complying with the Ukrainian reality (Pribytkova, 2004).

Apart from the positive and negative effects of remittances, which are also discussed bellow, the economic impacts of emigration include shortages of qualified personnel in some industries and regions, while qualified migrants working as unskilled labourers abroad may be over time de-skilled (what has been termed as “brain waste”), because they are ready to accept work in other sectors or have better professional experience then what is required for specific jobs in destination countries (Ostapchuk, 2010). Other studies point out to the qualitative changes that have occurred, in the last

ten years, in the Ukrainian labor market, which have weakened the country's position in terms of international competitiveness, while further drain of qualified professionals and scientists may consolidate this as a pattern (Parchomenko, 2011).

In addition, research has underlined some negative social implications of migration, including the increasing number of divorces, the pauperization of men, and the rise of phenomena ranging from child pornography to alcoholism (Kostiuk, 2010, etc.). Among the conclusions is the need for state reforms in respect to the economy and society at large.

Moreover, the researchers highlight the need for increased migration controls and the establishment of effective mechanism to regulate the migratory flows, bilateral agreements between states to guarantee the basic rights of Ukrainian immigrants in host countries and to enable them the transfer of insurance and pension rights, while Ukrainian governments needs to work towards improving the living standards of its citizens by creating jobs and new labor market opportunities, stabilizing the economy, etc. (Parhomenko , 2011, Michaliova, 2011, Lomaka, 2011).

### **2.3. The gender dimension in Ukrainian migration**

Until the 1990s, labour migration was mostly a 'male domain'; since then, women participate in the migration process as autonomous social actors. This is reflected in both legislation and research, whereby women were mentioned or considered only in the context of family reunification. There are various common patterns women follow in the migration process, associated with: marriage with a view to migration, family reunification, forced migration (including trafficking), labour migration, etc.

Specifically in the case of Greece, where women form up to 80% among the total number of Ukrainians, as indicated by the results of the first regularisation programme, it has observed that women more often than men leave their children and spouses back home (Cavounidis, 2003). This not only reflects autonomous female mobility, but mostly highlights that the Ukrainian migration model is shaped by gender (*ibid.*). Such patterns predominate in Greece, emphasising the importance of gender in understanding migration flows from Ukraine.

In the rest of Europe, female participation is an important feature of Ukrainian migration. Immigrant women from Ukraine residing in European countries in 2009 formed a share of 60% in the total Ukrainian population; especially in Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Poland women exceeded 70% (Hofmann & Reichel, 2011). In Greece, according to Labour Force Survey data for the first trimester of 2010 women formed 70% among Ukrainians in the country, while in the last trimester of 2011 they were 84%. This gender disproportion is encountered in all European countries. In some, such as Portugal and the Czech Republic, it is men who predominate. The reasons of these imbalances are due to labour market specificities in each country, such as the labour demand to which Ukrainian migrants respond, their established social networks, their migratory plans, as well as the host country legislation. Thus, in countries like Greece and Italy, many women were since their arrival directed towards domestic work and caretaking activities. On the other hand, men were attracted by demand in the construction sector in Portugal and Spain, where they could subsequently bring their families since the legal framework was more favourable regarding family reunification.

A study by Gerasimenko (2006) examines the importance and consequences of female migration, and the demographic characteristics of those migrating. In sum, Gerasimenko emphasised the role of women as a key source of revenue for the family, yet notes that long-term migration affects negatively relationships within the family, or may result in a delay in family formation and childbirth. As a consequence of the increased participation of women and young people in the migration process, the

demographic situation in the country is significantly altered, which is highlighted as a concern by several Ukrainian researchers. In general, international labour migration in recent years has resulted in labour market segmentation by gender. With regard to the demographic characteristics of women emigrating from Ukraine, most are aged between 30-44 and married, reveals the needs of the family budget as a root cause of migration, especially in the countryside since women from villages tend to be more involved in migratory movements. In line with that, it is indicative that some 2.8 % of village women migrated abroad for work, compared to 1.5 % of women from the cities (Gerasimenko, 2006).

Another aspect of the family impact of migration the weakening of family ties and the increase of divorce rates, is that children who remain in Ukraine do not enjoy the necessary parental care, which may have negative consequences for both themselves and society as a whole (Parhomenko, 2011, Volodko & Fedyuk, 2011, Kostiuk, 2010). Most of these children, labelled as 'social orphans', were born in small villages or mountain areas; in order to cope they rely on the economic remittances sent by their parents, mostly by the mothers, and they do not approach specific social services when faced with a problem (Volodko & Fedyuk, 2011). Primary research conducted in Greece in 2008 by Nikolova and Marouf (2010), revealed another side of the same issue. Most women occupied in domestic work are without residence permits in Greece, which creates barriers in their dealings with state services, restricts their movement and their interaction with friends and relatives, and this has a direct impact also on their relationships with the families left behind in Ukraine. The interviewees in that study referred often to broken families due to the absence of the mother, who can neither return (because then she would not be able to come back to Greece in a lawful manner, etc.), nor to invite officially her children to visit or stay with her.

## **2.4. Human Trafficking**

Since the early 1990s, alongside problems such as poverty, growing unemployment and lack of opportunities, with the beginning of migratory flows there developed, domestically and abroad networks for trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The most extensive study on the issue of trafficking from Ukraine is by Hughes and Denisova (2003), while Emke-Poulopoulou (2001, 2003) has written on the case of Greece.

Ukraine was a country worst affected by human trafficking; according to the IOM, the victims were more than 120,000 women and children from all over the country since 1991 until 2013 (Interview N1). The majority of women were sent to countries such as Turkey, Greece, Italy, Romania, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Syria and Germany. Research on the topic focuses on the ways by which the traffickers 'fish' women (promising job opportunities abroad as waitresses or dancers), the ways in which the networks were operating in order to transport the women and to force them to prostitution, the anatomy of profits from human trafficking the ways the networks protect traffickers. Hughes & Denisova (2003) emphasize that trafficking is organized crime, involving corrupted officials in both sending and destination countries; consequently, human trafficking is a transnational problem, and as such it must be transnationally addressed, with measures taken by both destination and origin states.

Hughes and Denisova (2003) offer an interesting explanation for the emergence of criminal networks. Following the collapse of the state planned economy, the wave of privatizations allowed illegal markets and businesses in the grey economy to flourish, operating on the basis of pre-existing corruption schemes. These companies provided work to many people who had lost their jobs and were unable to find elsewhere; by 1995, the contribution of the grey economy to of Ukraine's GDP was estimated to be as high as 50% (ibid).

Data on the victims of human trafficking who sought help (IOM, 2012) indicated that between 2000-2012, Russia and Poland were among the main countries of destination for victims of trafficking; Greece is also mentioned as a key destination. The statistics of the Hellenic Police and the academic research articles at that time also confirm that the human trafficking from Ukraine was an issue. In recent years, Greek police statistics indicate some decrease in the number of Ukrainians arrested for trafficking in human beings. Back in 2003, Greece had the worst record regarding the registration of women victims of trafficking and lagged in efforts to combat the phenomenon, according to a report by the U.S. Department of State (Hughes & Denisova, 2003).

In 2011, the Ukrainian President Mr. Viktor Yanukovich signed a law on combating human trafficking, to the drafting of which IOM Ukraine decisively contributed. The law laid the ground for the infrastructure and legal principles that should guide the fight against trafficking, such as: the procedures to declare the victims of trafficking as such and to support them, the competencies of the executive power, as well as the basis for international cooperation. After the law was voted in 2011, a lawyer specialising in cases of human trafficking said, in an interview to the IOM newsletter, that in the last years judges perceive much more seriously those cases, while in the past victims were approached in a completely different manner (IOM Ukraine Newsletter, 2012).

## **2.5. Brain drain**

Exploring migration trends from Ukraine, special reference should be made to the issue of brain drain, which appears to be a real concern for researchers in Ukraine. Prochorenko (2010), Kizhi (2009), and Parkhomenko (2006), among others, have studied the causes and factors leading scientists to leave and analyse the impact of these outflows which have severely affected the Ukrainian economy.

In the migration literature, brain drain refers to the migration of scientists seeking better working conditions abroad, as well as to young people who leave for studies and tend to stay abroad after graduation. An estimated 30% of all Ukrainian scientists work outside the country (Karpachova, 2005), mostly in developed economies which are attractive to them for a number of reasons: research funding opportunities, better working conditions, opportunities for career development, but also the ability to travel abroad, to maintain professional communication and participate in the global scientific community (Kizic, 2009, Prochorenko, 2010/2). All these provide motives for Ukrainian scientists and re-establish their lost social status.

Basic migration drivers for highly skilled professionals, or push factors, include: limited ability to communicate with colleagues abroad, low salaries and delays in payments, lack of demand in the Ukrainian market for research on high technologies, but also use of old technologies in laboratories, limited funding opportunities and non-recognition of the scientists' contribution in society (Prohorenko, 2010). Much of the concern regarding the impact of the phenomenon relates specifically to the departure of physicists, mathematicians, IT developers, biologists, chemists and doctors, i.e. those involved in the high tech development. A typical feature of brain drain from Ukraine is that for most of the highly skilled migrants their destination does seem to be irrelevant, in the sense that it does not matter to which part of the world they will find work, as long as it provides them with good opportunities and conditions allowing professional development. On the other hand, young people who have the means to study abroad and be more competitive later on, prefer to emigrate to the U.S., Germany, France and Poland (Kizima, 2009). According to Prohorenko (2010), Ukraine needs to take measures in order to stop this outflow or to pull back its scientists working abroad, for instance through joint projects or collaborations without the requirement of physical presence in the country.

A recent perspective on the topic comes from an ICMPD report by Hofmann and Reichel (2011), pointing out that the cost of education for the Ukrainian state is very high and there is a large percentage of graduates. The problem is that this manpower remains untapped in the local labor market, because either the supply of skilled workers does not correspond to the needs of the labor market, or there are not attractive opportunities for the highly qualified. To ensure that the qualified personnel will remain in the domestic labour market, Ukraine needs to adjust its educational system to market needs as well as to create attractive conditions and jobs. In the report, the authors also refer to the fact that qualified Ukrainians work in European countries in low-skilled or unskilled positions and thus their human capital is 'wasted', while worldwide competition for skilled and talented people is continuously increasing (Hofmann & Reichel, 2011).

This last point is confirmed in the case of Greece, whereby the overall educational level of Ukrainians is relatively high, especially among women. Data from Labour Force Surveys for the last trimester of 2012 reveal that one third of Ukrainian immigrant women residing in the country have degrees of higher technical education, while some 4% are university graduates.

## **2.6. Remittances**

The role of migrants' remittances and their impact on the Ukrainian economy, the factors which determine whether immigrants will send money to their families, and the amounts sent, are extensively discussed in the literature. Taking into account that Ukraine is among the world's top ten emigration countries and that some 4% of its GDP comes from migrants' remittances (Ostapchuk, 2010), it rather becomes obvious that the role of remittances is crucial for the country's economy.

According to a report by the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, the amount of officially transacted remittances is estimated at about 400 million dollars per month, while in poor areas, as in Ternopil, Chernivtsi etc., the ratio between investments of immigrants and foreign investment is 40:1 (Parhomenko, 2011).

Another hotly debated topic in the relevant literature focuses on the investment of remittances capital by the migrants' relatives in Ukraine. Evidence suggests that the greatest amount of remittances is spent to address basic needs - for food, clothing, shelter, medicines, etc., while some are invested in real estate, in the education of children and very rarely go to investment in enterprises (Kostiuk, 2010).

The findings of a survey of Ukrainian immigrants in Portugal showed that older migrants tend to send more than their younger fellows, which is explained on the basis of their family commitments (Ostapchuk, 2010). The number of children left back in Ukraine is also a reason to send more. It was also observed that higher income households tend to invest remittances sent from relatives abroad in enterprises, while low-income families receive lower amounts. The time spent abroad does not appear to impact on the amount of remittances: some immigrants gradually found better jobs and started sending more, while in other cases as time passes by living costs increase and migrants were unable to increase the amount of money they sent to their families (Ostapchuk, 2010). A general conclusion is that remittances help families to meet their needs and have a direct impact on poverty reduction in the short run, because in most of the cases the money are spent to cover basic needs and not used for "productive" investment (Ostapchuk, 2010).

A detailed analysis of the positive and negative effects of remittances is given by Olga Koupets (2012) under the program CARIM East European University in Florence. Her report underlines that Russia, USA, Germany, Greece and Cyprus are officially the largest source-countries of remittances, while

remittances sent from Poland and other neighbouring countries with largest numbers of Ukrainian migrants are transferred informally and consequently they are invisible in official statistics. However, the households from the region of Western Ukraine receive more than half of the total amount of remittances, unlike the more developed eastern regions bordering with Russia. In general, it is usually middle and lower middle class families living in urban areas other than capital who receive financial support from abroad. Moreover Koupets (2012) underlines some negative effects on the banking sector and on society at large. In particular, she points out to the rise of real-estate prices as a result of the hard investment through remittances, leading migrants to lengthen their stay abroad for longer than originally planned, and putting pressures on families in Ukraine for further migration to cope with expenses. Another outgrowth of remittances, at least when their purpose is linked to the long-term stay of a family member abroad, is the negative impact on children and on the relationships within the family (Piperno 2011; Tolstokorova 2009a; 2010 a; b). Finally, a “dangerous moral problem”, as defined by Kupets (2012), is that the political will for necessary reforms weakens as a result of the economic support families receive through remittances.

On the positive side, remittances do not involve public spending, while the increased family income due to remittances increases the national income, through the stimulation of demand and growth of production (Ostapchuk, 2010). In addition, remittances contribute to eliminate a heavy burden on the economy, that of unemployment, and allow some investment in business: 60% of the returnees that start a small business or expand an already existing one do so with money earned abroad. On the other hand, remittances have no direct contribution to the pension system or the state budget, which is expected in the long-run to reduce social security funds. It has been estimated that if half of the immigrants in 2008 worked in Ukraine on an average salary, they would have contributed to the public budget with approximately 1.5 million dollars (Ostapchuk, 2010).

For the above reasons, most Ukrainian scholars underline that migration has contradictory consequences for Ukraine. According to Ostapchuk (2010), the positive effects of remittances are far more important than their negative consequences, but their long-term effects are yet to be seen. However, the key problem remains the root causes of emigration, namely low wages and the lack of prospects in Ukraine (Ostapchuk, 2010).

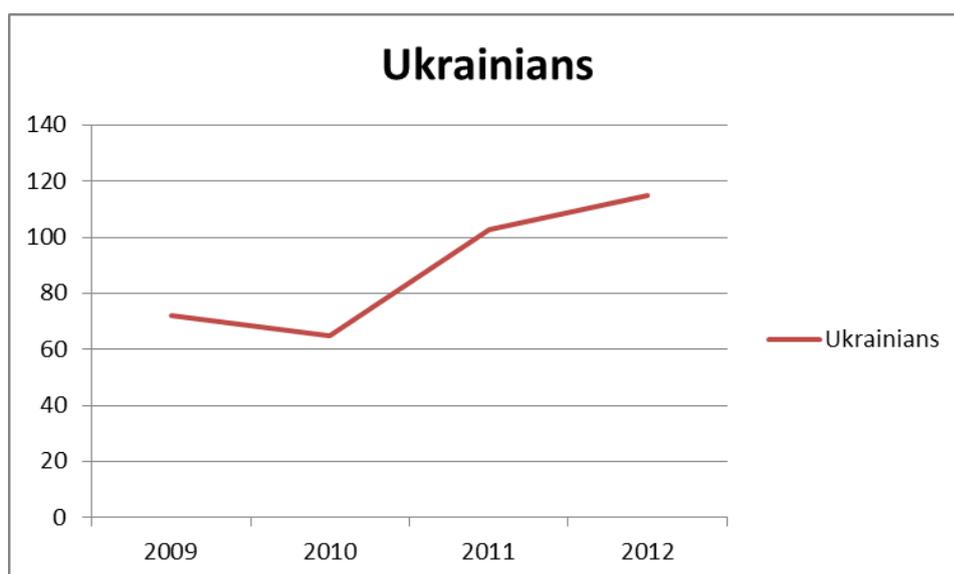
## **2.7. Return to Ukraine**

Return migration in the Ukrainian case appears to take three forms: 1) following decision of the immigrant and/or his/her family to return with their own financial means; 2) through organized programs such as the IOM’s assisted voluntary return program; 3) forced return following expulsion and deportation. Some data on return migration are available in IOM reports, as well as Greek Police, and are about the numbers of Ukrainians expelled or those who benefited of voluntary return programs. The majority of Ukrainian returnees, however, remain statistically invisible, as they are returning back to their homeland on their own means; evidence from the background study informing this report suggests that in their majority they hold a stay permit in Greece. In general, recommendations underline the importance on the creation of a favourable environment in Ukraine providing opportunities in the labour market and good conditions for investment, so that returnees will be able to start small enterprises back home, which is not the case thus far (Malynovska, 2012). Projects for the reintegration of Ukrainian returnees have already been in place, but without much demand for their services, and in that sense they were unsuccessful (interview N1).

Such programmes are run by the IOM mission in Ukraine, specifically regarding the reintegration of returnees from Italy, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Switzerland, Ireland, Slovakia

and Latvia, which operate as collaborative schemes between IOM Ukraine host country governments. The role of IOM is to provide training and support to returnees so that they will be able to start their own businesses, but also to provide them with medical advice and treatment, and help them with housing. Between 2004-2012, about 400 Ukrainian returnees benefited from the IOM programme for assisted voluntary return: none among those had returned from Greece (except of victims of trafficking) (interview N12). On the other hand, the Greek Police lately also implements voluntary return programmes and the number of returned Ukrainians in 2012 was 57 persons, while another 115 persons were deported during the same year, almost twice as high as in 2010, when 65 people were deported from Greece to Ukraine (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Deported Ukrainians from Greece during the period 2009-2012**



Source: Hellenic Police Department

For more than five years, the non-governmental organization Caritas Ukraine has been running programmes for repatriation and reintegration of Ukrainian migrant workers who voluntarily decided to return from EU member countries. According to the organisation's website <sup>3</sup>, their network is spread on 15 regions with a central office in Lvov. Reintegration activities includes the provision of social services, information and psychological support, as well as legal and financial assistance. According to the organisation's experience, most Ukrainian returnees have not achieved their goals (to save enough to buy property, or pay for children's education, etc.) and they had to return back in Ukraine because they had no other choice – e.g. because of health problems or because they lost their job.

<sup>3</sup> [http://caritas-ua.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=468](http://caritas-ua.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=468), Accessed 30/03/2013

### 3. Ukrainian immigration to Greece

#### 3.1. Key trends of Ukrainian migration to Greece

Ukrainian immigration to Greece in the 1990s followed the similar patterns, to those of the migrations from other former communist states, driven more or less by similar factors. The most important pull factor was the demand for cheap work in the informal labour market, as well as the restrictive migration policies of Western Europe countries (Castles and Miller, 2003 in Maroufouf and Nikolova, 2010). Although Greece was not a key destination for Ukrainian migrants, it has been among the first EU member states to receive immigrants since the mid-1990s, just after the release of the exit visa regime in Ukraine. In addition, Greece appears in Ukrainian statistics already since 1997-1998 as one of the countries with highest number of officially working Ukrainian migrants. The most common way for the Ukrainians to come to Greece at the time was through a tourist visa, the terms of which were subsequently violated by overstaying for working informally. With the regularisation programmes that took place, many Ukrainians managed to legalise their status, with most of the stay permits being issued for dependent employment. In brief, during the 1990s, a strong pull factor was the desire of Ukrainians for a new beginning in a “western” country, while an equally important push factor was the lack of opportunities and unemployment in Ukraine.

**Map 2: Ukrainian migrants’ routes to European countries and Greece**



Source: i-Map Interactive Map of Migration by ICMPD, <http://www.imap-migration.org/>

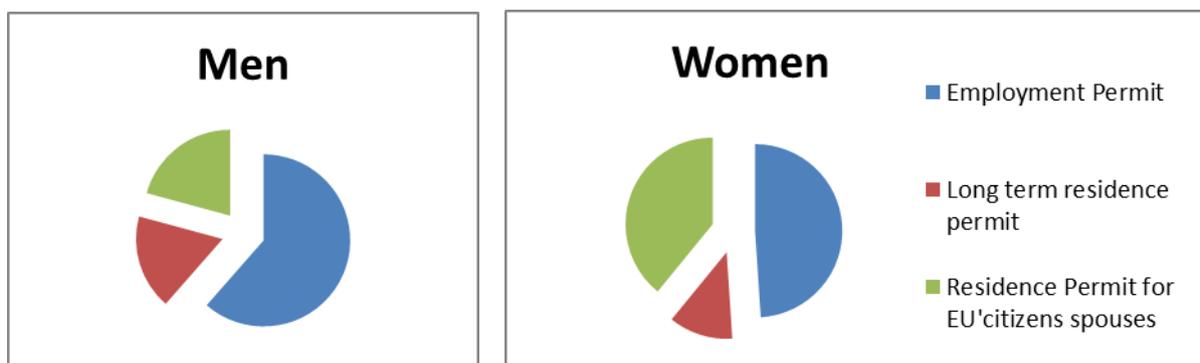
The first regularisation program for immigrants who until then lived and worked in Greece without the necessary papers was implemented in 1998. The deficits of Greek immigration policy until then had resulted in the legal “invisibility” of immigrants and their absorption in the grey labour market.

Regularisation made visible the number of people who had worked for years without rights and obligations towards the state. Some 9,821 Ukrainians applied for the so-called White card (the first stage of the process) in 1998, or 2.6% of all applicants (Baldwin-Edwards/Kraler, 2009).

To obtain a residence permit or Green card (the second stage of the process), immigrants had to have their papers filed for the White card or to meet its conditions. Some 5,896 Ukrainians applied for the Green card, or 2.8% of the total (ibid.), and could and were expected to renew their permits latter on provided that they by fulfilled the conditions. Three years later, in 2001, a new immigration bill was voted including an essential the provision for a new regularisation programme. According to the procedure, migrants had to submit their documents to the municipalities in order have their work permits issue, which they would then submit to apply for a residence permit. This rather complicated procedure caused complete chaos in the local services responsible for the processing of documents, thus the scheme had not the expected results. During the third regularisation programme based on Law 3386/2005, a total of 3,677 Ukrainians (2,731 women and 946 men) or 3,8% of the total number of applicants (data from the Ministry of Interior quoted in Baldwin-Edwards and Kraler, 2009) submitted their papers. Finally, a last regularisation programme resulted in just 182 Ukrainians receiving stay permits, according to the provisions of Law 3536/2007, which gave third country nationals the opportunity to obtain a stay permit of indefinite duration under the condition that they had been living legally in Greece for at least ten years.

Most Ukrainians in Greece originate from Western Ukraine - Lviv, Ivano-Frankovsk, Uzhhorod, but also from the central and eastern regions of the country (Interview N4; Rovenchak and Volodko, 2010; Levchenko, 2010). According to 2001 Census, over 13,500 Ukrainian nationals resided in Greece at the time, 60% of them in the region of Attica, with some concentrations in central Macedonia, the Peloponnese and Crete, which seems by 2007 has not changed (Nikolova and Maroufof, 2010). In the case of Ukraine we can talk about predominantly female migration and this has not changed since the first arrivals of Ukrainians in the 1990s.

**Figure 1 Main types of residence permits held by Ukrainian nationals, by gender, 2011**



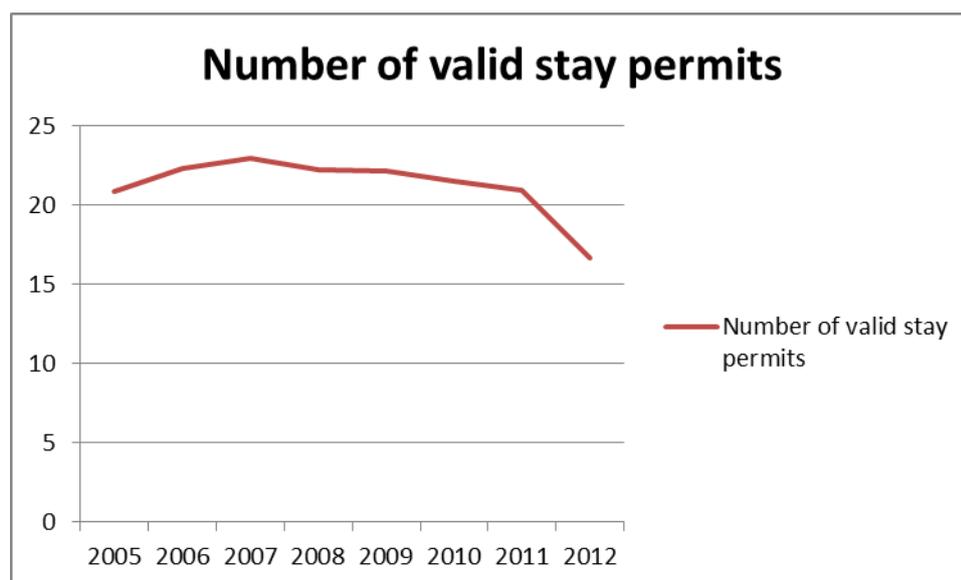
Source: Greek Ministry of Interior

According to the Greek Ministry of Interior, in December 2011 the total number of Ukrainians holding a valid stay permits was 16,570, of whom 81% were to women. Most of the these were issued are for dependent employment (total number of 7,736, of which 6,257 to women and 1,479 to men); the second largest category were on the grounds of marriage with EU citizens (mainly with Greeks: approximately 5,500, of which 5,000 are issued to women); a significant share are the holders of long term residence permits (total number of 1,950, of which 1,521 to women and 429 to men) (See Figure 1). Under the Presidential Decree 131/06 on the Harmonisation of the Greek legislation with Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification, some 1,317 permits were issued for family unification purposes by the end of 2011 (796 to women and 521 to men).

**Table 1. Valid stay permits held by Ukrainian nationals in Greece, 2005-2012**

Nationality/Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ukrainians	20,854	22,295	22,995	22,210	22,178	21,523	20,959	16,698

Source: Greek Ministry of Interior

**Figure 3. Valid stay permits held by Ukrainian nationals in Greece, 2005-2012**

Source: Greek Ministry of Interior

Estimates by community organisations over the number of Ukrainians in Greece do not differ radically from official figures. Some community leaders mentioned that the Ukrainians residing in Greece should be approximately 30,000 people, remarking that many have acquired Greek citizenship, while about 5,000 people live and work without papers (Interviews N6 and N7). The Ukrainian Embassy's estimation on the number of irregular migrants is that the people without papers are around 3,000<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.2. Economic crisis and the trend of return

In the meantime, the upward phase of the Greek economy is no more and the signs of crisis gradually appeared since the second half of the 2000s, beginning with a downturn in the construction sector. It thus is around 2007-2008, when a new phase of Ukrainian migration in Greece begins, entailing the return of migrants back home, while Greece is not any more a destination for new Ukrainian migrants. An exceptions to this latter concerns relatively small numbers of relatives of immigrants already in Greece who come to work for short periods of time, who should not however be considered as new arrivals and they are engaging in short term labour mobility usually without legal documents, and return back to Ukraine (Levchenko, 2010). Since 2010, the impact of the economic crisis in Greece was overall apparent on the labour market, especially e.g. on the construction sector where many migrant men, not only Ukrainians, were either loosing their jobs or experienced significant drops in their monthly wages or reduced working days per month.

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/blshst\\_ukranskikh\\_trudovih\\_migrantv\\_u\\_grets\\_gotov\\_povernutisya\\_v\\_ukranu\\_\\_\\_mzs\\_952970](http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/blshst_ukranskikh_trudovih_migrantv_u_grets_gotov_povernutisya_v_ukranu___mzs_952970)

The cessation of the migrations flows to Greece already since 2008 came also as a combined result of the tightening visa regime, the signs of stabilisation of the Ukrainian economy and rising wages there, but also the possibility for women to retire in their country - which was not an option in Greece (Nikolova/Marouf, 2010). At the same time, it appears that there is a further shift in overall migration patterns from Ukraine, since new potential migrants are often young and educated people searching for a qualified job or further education and would thus not target Greece as a destination.

According to recent research female immigrants engaged in domestic work who came to Greece as early as in the 1990s tend to remain in the country, while even if they return to Ukraine this is often for a short period of time before coming back to Greece after a while (Levchenko, K. 2010). Later arrivals who arrived in 2006-2007 stayed for a shorter period and nearly all returned back, and its men who more often than women tended to spend shorter periods working in Greece, on average three years before returning back to Ukraine (ibid.). An explanation of such gender disparities in respect to the decision to return may be partly found in the fact that many Ukrainian women have married Greek men, as revealed from data on mixed marriages of the Hellenic Statistical Authority as well as from key-informant interviews (interviews N6 and N8).

As the financial crisis intensifies since 2010, Ukrainian men find it harder to keep their jobs or find new ones, which offers an explanation for the outflow of many families to Ukraine. According to a representative of a Ukrainian community organisation in Athens, seven out of ten men have returned to Ukraine and some have already moved to Russia in order to find work there. The same interviewee explained that there are several strategies followed by the families to cope with the crisis, and maintain their dignity. An example given was about a husband who lost his job and could not support his family, so they decided that the spouse with the child will leave for Ukraine, where the later would not bare the "stigma" of being a child of immigrants, while the husband applied for citizenship in Greece (Interview N6). Lastly, one interviewee mentioned cases of mixed families (Ukrainian women with their Greek husbands) departing to Ukraine with the aim to settle there (Interview N6).

In this respect, a common strategy to prepare for a smooth return to Ukraine is to send children to a Ukrainian school in Athens, in order to learn the language and get a degree so that they children will be more prepared for the new environment upon return. There are three Sunday schools operating in Athens, and one that operates on a weekly basis following the full Ukrainian curriculum. Since 2008, examiners from the International School in Kiev (established by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education), come twice a year to monitor the progress of students and give degrees to graduates.

Some families who returned to Ukraine appeared to be unable to adjust psychologically and to return back to Greece. Many of those who leave are legal residents in Greece, often holding long term stay permits, so they can allow for a period to test whether they will succeed in Ukraine or will decide to come back in Greece. Especially older women returning to Ukraine tend to come back to Greece after a short period of time, because they are used to the way of life and still have the opportunity to work as domestic helpers for about 400 euros (Interview N4). Things are different for young women, however, since there are very few cases of them employed as "internal" domestic workers, because if they fail to find "external" work, they usually prefer to leave to Ukraine and re-migrate either to Poland for seasonal agricultural jobs, or to Russia in search for work as babysitters or domestic helpers (Interview N4).

Representatives from community organisations (Interview 6) identified a number of reasons why immigrants might be hesitant regarding the return to Ukraine. The psychological factor plays a major role in the decision. Migrants might be reluctant to return because they have developed new habits and a way of living in an environment with different cultural characteristics, while they are not able to conceive a successful reintegration back to Ukraine. This is also highlighted in general studies on Ukrainian migration and is associated with the longer duration of stay as a factor suppressing the decision to return. Moreover, as the both the literature and the interviews conducted in Athens testify,

return remains problematic as long as there is no suitable economic environment in Ukraine to develop small enterprises.

### 3.3. Employment, unemployment and social insurance

According Labour Force Survey data for the period 2007-2012, Ukrainians were employed mostly in the sectors of domestic work and construction. Until 2010, they had high employment rates in the sector of domestic help (52%), followed by retail trade and repair of motor vehicles (17.4%), employees in hotels and catering establishments (17.4%) and in construction (10.2%). They generally do not appear to be mobile between different sectors of employment, but tend to remain in the same sectors, a small exception being a steady rise in those employed in the hotel and catering industry since 2008. The number of employed Ukrainians according to Labour Force Survey statistics more or less coincides with that of those who in 2007 were insured with IKA, the main social fund in Greece, which indicates that the majority of employed Ukrainians are insured and consequently are with legal papers.

According to a 2008 study by Psimmenos and Skamnakis, the lack of documents plays an important role in determining the economic activity and the absorption of immigrant women in the sector of domestic work. Some women did not initially know they had to pay for the required insurance stamps which would also give them opportunity to issue a stay permit or to renew an existing one, or in some cases they could not manage to enrol in the lists for insurance with IKA. The problem with insurance stamps appears when immigrants need to change their employment status from live-in domestic workers to "external" work. As a rule, immigrant women made great efforts in order to regularise their residence status and most estimates agree that the Ukrainian community is generally characterised by a very low numbers of irregular migrants. Despite the changing legislation and cumbersome bureaucracy, many Ukrainians managed to get long term stay permits. However, for women employed in domestic work it has been to maintain their work permits, as this still depends on social insurance contributions. As mentioned during the interviews with community organisations, as a rule employers of domestic workers would not pay the social security contributions through the system of "ergosimo", introduced recently to address this problem<sup>5</sup>.

I5: Who is buying "ergosimo"?!

MN: The employers...

I5: They don't do that.

MN: Why not;

I5: Each employer is saying "my salary was cut off; I don't have money, so I won't buy for you too..."... As much as I am aware – those who had security contributions, they don't

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<sup>5</sup> "With the provision of Article 24 of Law 3863/2010 was introduced for the first time the system of paying social contributions through "ergosimo". This brought significant changes in the way of wages' and insurances' payments for the employees in the sector of domestic work that provide an employment paid by the hour or by the day, at regular basis, either to one or to more than one employer for the same payroll period covered by IKA insurance. The same applies to workers in the sector of agriculture covered by OGA insurance... The "ergosimo" corresponds to a specific monetary value which includes the amount of the employee's remuneration and the amount of contributions to the social security institution." Gamvroudi, V. (November 2011) in the Journal *Epitheorisis IKA Insurance and Labour Laws*, Accessed 28/04/2013: [http://www.eaed.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4315%3A2011-11-02-13-07-44&catid=244%3A-2009&Itemid=285&lang=el](http://www.eaed.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4315%3A2011-11-02-13-07-44&catid=244%3A-2009&Itemid=285&lang=el)

have them anymore. Or those who were paying and were always stable with that, now have so reduced salaries now, so they can't afford it". (Interview N5)

"When it was once self-insurance, it was easier, because okay, how to say, the employer could be false. But at least the employee had IKA, had insurance. Because of "ergosimo" thing are worse. It's too much worse. Because Greeks do not want to buy "ergosimo", they do not want this – why? Because of fear...; Fear of the tax offices, because they do not want to be found?! Who knows...Some of them do not know what it is, do not want to know, but they say it is messy, others do not have the time to go and buy. Various excuses..."- (Interview N4).

Thus, it appears that the new legislation does not work in practice. A chief executive of the Municipality of Athens and of the Immigrants' Integration Council made a general comment on the issue of "ergosimo" and the limitations of reporting such issues affecting migrants in general:

"For the problems that come to us through the Integration Council of Immigrants, i.e. we will contact the Ministry of Labour in order to put the issue of "ergosimo". Whatever comes as a problem from the immigrant communities in which we identify a general issue we try to highlight it to the central decision makers. The issues always have to be associated with the integration process at the state level" (Interview N9).

Moreover, it appears that over the last two or three years things have somehow settled in the sector of live-in domestic workers from Ukraine - salaries range between 400-500 euros, while some women took the decision to work on external jobs because of their young age, the desire for independence on the space and time management or because of their family commitments. Most women working as domestic helpers, especially live-in, are elder and are for a long time in the sector, as it mentioned in the interviews. When they first arrived, they were attracted by some of the conditions in this type of work: a fixed salary, on-time payments, permanency of the job and minimum language requirements. Eight to ten years ago, there were plenty of easily accessible "external" low-status jobs, so the young women going for those jobs had also the chance to rent apartments. Now the situation has changed and the wages for e.g. house cleaners have been reduced due to the crisis, and the migrants who cannot cope with their living costs prefer to leave to Ukraine rather than looking for work as live-in domestic helpers. From the perspective of employers, on the other hand, some prefer to employ internal domestic helpers for various reasons, which are however not anymore attractive to younger immigrant women as implied in the quotation below:

"When mommy was working here to study children in Ukraine, children studied, they got a degree and say there is no work. Mom does not want her daughter to follow same pattern as her. Best for the mother is to stay here to work hard and to send money there, not wanting her daughter to come here as a maid, as a domestic helper. Not because they do not need the money, but their way of thinking and feeling has changed. "I've tried it, my kids I do not want". But some who are really poor are still coming; God forbid, if someone gets sick in the family and the family needs more money, then girls come from there, yes." (Interview N4)

### 3.4. Potential Migrants from Ukraine to Greece and Visa Policies

Data from counselling centre for potential migrants in Western Ukraine show that, during the period January 2006- January 2013, there remains some interest in coming to Greece, even if it is not among the top preferences. There is no evidence if the people who turned to the centre have actually accomplished their intention to migrate or, if they did so, whether they reached the destination they had asked information for.

The data were kindly provided by IOM Kiev and the Centre in Ternopil itself depict the demographic profile of people who have requested information, as well as the kind of information requested. The Centre for Migrant Advice (CMA) was until 2005 part of a network of eight similar centres throughout Ukraine (in Kiev, Odessa, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Uzhhorod, Lvov, and two in Vinnytsia), managed by the IOM Capacity Building in Migration Management Program (CBMMP). The CMA focuses on the needs of potential migrants and its key role is to provide credible information on the labour market, studies and travelling abroad. Its key aim is that the final decision of potential migrants will be based on reliable information, so as to minimise the risks of migration related to encounters with a different culture, life away from family and friends, or the ignorance of host country legislation.

Currently, only the CMA in Ternopil still exists; it was the largest and busiest one, because it operates a hotline offering information services. Since the beginning of 2006 and over the next seven years, 2,052 people came in contact with the Centre in Ternopil to obtain information about Greece in particular. This is a comparatively small number, bearing in mind that just for a period of one year (June 2011-July 2012), the centre has provided advice to a total number of 18,500 people.

Most of those seeking information were women (1,434 compared to 618 men), most live in large cities (1,763), while two thirds of them were employed (1,326) and the remaining 648 persons were unemployed. The vast majority were in the 18-35 years age group, with technical education in their majority, while 28% have a university degree. Most of them wanted to go to Greece in order to find temporary, but not seasonal work. Their requests to the Centre included to bring them into contact with embassies and other organizations (71%) or to seek information on labour market opportunities (70%), while there were also some who asking information on issues of human trafficking (41%) or even tourism (16%). Among those clients who were interested in labour market opportunities, most were interested in the fishing industry and shipping, while only a small proportion were interested in domestic work or care for elderly people or children. It is worth pointing out that the employees of CMA are prohibited from giving any information about job-finding agencies, ask names or cooperate with such agencies (Interview N2).

Generally, the advices given to Ukrainians interested in Greece are related to practical issues such as having enough money to deal with potential difficulties, information on the rights of workers abroad, on the relevant stakeholders in the country of destination, key stakeholders' contact details e.g. phone numbers of the Ukrainian consulate in the country, NGOs supporting immigrants in Greece, or the Ukrainian associations in Greece. In addition, the CMA advices their clients to make photocopies of all travel documents, identity card and visa, to have a phone number of a friend or relative in Greece, and to leave photocopies of all their personal documents with safe hands in Ukraine (Interview N2). In sum, the information centre in Ternopil clarified that it was mostly young people seeking opportunities in Greece during the period 2006-2013, which is inconsistent with the typical profile Ukrainians already in the country – most men in Greece are employed in the construction sector, while the majority of males addressing the CMA were searching for jobs in fishing or shipping.

According to results of monitoring activities by the Ukrainian NGO Europe Without Borders on the consulates of EU member states in Ukraine, in 2012 the practice of issuing visas by Greek consulates improved in comparison to the past two years – the percentage of visa denials declined while there have been substantial improvements regarding the behaviour of consulate staff towards visa applicants (Interview N3). In addition, the number of Schengen visas issued by Greek consulates has also increased since": the three Greek consulates in Ukraine (in Kiev, Mariupol and Odessa), issued altogether 64,821 such visas in 2011, while in 2012 the number doubled and reached 128,880 visas, even though the proportion of multiple entry visas issued remains low.

The experts from the NGO Europe Without Borders pointed out that they have not had any response from the Greek Embassy on their request for data on the demographic profile of Ukrainian visa applicants, but according to a survey conducted by the NGO itself, it seemed that their profile in 2012

has not changed compared with the past two years. Specifically, Greece continues to attract above all "tourists", "businessmen" and "close relatives." The results from another survey conducted by the NGO in 2011 confirms official data available in Greece and what is known from the literature, i.e. that the country is not a preferred destination for Ukrainians, who look for a ways to migrate to countries for the culture of which they have some sympathy or because they have relatives already living there – i.e. mostly to Germany, Italy, France, Russia, Canada and USA. The members of the NGO Europe Without Borders believe that Ukrainians are now well informed on Greece as a host country thanks to "well-organized social networks and horizontal communications", but refer to the lack of specific programmes and official information about legal migration channels, formal employment and life conditions in the country.

It could be generally argued that restrictive visa policies have not been an obstacle for Ukrainian immigrants who decided to migrate to European countries, and the most popular way to realize the migration project still is, as highlighted above, the strategy of legal entry with a short-term visa the duration of which is then violated by staying irregularly in the country until they manage to arrange their papers. In this respect, it is worth referring to the results of a 2008 survey conducted by the NGO Caritas and the Ethnological Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, which showed that the restrictions (e.g. visa policies) designed to prevent the migration of Ukrainians to EU member states proved ineffective (Interview 3). Hence

"The closure of borders only enhances illegal migration and fails to stimulate immigrants' return home from recipient countries. A visa "filter" creates obstacles to immigrants' out-flow rather than stopping their influx into the EU. Such practice can lead to the formation of a new "Iron Curtain", interiorly, this time, and not from outside the EU countries. (Interview N3).

In a report of the European University Institute's project CARIM-EAST, it is highlighted that the process of liberalisation of visas for Ukrainians need to be followed by some important provisions, such as good information about the rules of free entry, which is not unconditional, the possibilities of but also limitations of European employers, while European countries should take into account the fact that many Ukrainians who remain in their territories undocumented will want to legalise their stay (Weinar, A., Korneev, O. et al., 2012).

## **4. Concluding remarks**

Historically, Greece was one of the first destinations attracting part of the broader migration outflow from Ukraine in the mid-1990s towards West-European countries. The pick of the flow was during 1997-1998 and lasted until the first years of the new millennium, though it has considerably decreased since. Greece appears in late 1990s statistics as one of the countries with the highest shares of legally resident Ukrainian workers, while it is known that, during the same period, there were dozens more immigrants who worked without papers in other countries, e.g. Poland. However, in Greece the Ukrainians are not as numerous as in other southern European countries, which can be partly explained by the female character of migration and labour demand in the country. The main push and pull factors were unemployment in Ukraine, immigrants' search for better living conditions, as well as relatively easy access to Greece after obtaining a tourist visa in 1990s. at present, Ukrainians are better informed about the living conditions in, and ways of immigration to Greece, but strategies for reliable information on legal migration channels need to be supported institutionally by governments and other organisations. Key features of Ukrainian migration to Greece include the fact that the majority of migrants are holders of stay permits, some of them have succeeded to obtain

citizenship, while those coming in the recent years to Greece are usually with the purpose of visiting relatives, for tourism or for business purposes. On their part, Ukrainian researchers underline in most of their recently published studies the need for increased controls and better regulation of migratory flows, of bilateral agreements between interested states in order to guarantee the basic rights of Ukrainian immigrants, and of legislation allowing the transfer of insurance and pension rights.

One of the core problems related to employment and insurance is to be found at labour market structures and at the inability to implement in practice legislation on social insurance, which renders invisible women in the sector of domestic work and makes them even more vulnerable. As a consequence, live-in domestic work has shifted from a solution to immediate financial problems of the family to a stigma, an impasse and an “altar” on which migrant women sacrifice their own wellbeing in favour of the family’s common good. They are therefore struggling to direct their children, especially daughters, towards other options.

The majority of women arrived in Greece during the 1990s and initially remained without papers in the country, so they did not have the opportunity to return or travel back and forth to their home and see their family, while communications at that time were not as sophisticated and cheap as now so as to enable them to maintain frequent and closer contact. Time and ignorance about the implications of informal work also contributed to alienation within the families. On the other hand, both the literature examined and the key-informant interviews highlight that women proved to be stronger than men when the factories in Ukraine shut down in the 1990s, taking on their shoulders all family responsibilities.

In Greece, where women are dominant among the Ukrainian migrant population – about 80% of all Ukrainians are women, as became evident since the first regularisation program – there has been observed that women more often than men leave their children and spouses back home. This, according to Cavounidi (2003) not simply proves the independent, autonomous of their movement, but most importantly reveals that the Ukrainian migration model is shaped by gender. The patterns observed in Greece highlight the importance of gender in understanding migration from Ukraine to the country.

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**ANNEX**

**Key Informant interviews**

No	Stakeholder	Way of communication	Date of communication
N1.	IOM (Ukraine)	Exchange of mails and skype conversation	07/02/2013-26/04/2013
N2.	Centre for Migrant Advice in Ternopil (Ukraine)	E-Mail	21/02/2013

N3.	NGO Europe without borders (Ukraine)	E-Mail	20/03/2013- 17/04/2013
N4.	Ukrainian Community in Greece – “Ukrainian land of stork”	Interview	8/2/2013
N5.	Centre for the support and promotion of Ukrainian heritage "Trembita»	Interview	11/2/2013
N6.	Community of the Ukrainian diaspora "Ukrainian-Greek Thought"	Interview	14/2/2013
N7.	Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre “Beregina”	Interview	21/02/2013
N8.	Branch of the community “Ukrainian Greek Thought” in the island of Rhodes	Interview	16/3/2013
N9.	Municipality of Athens, Advisor to the Mayor on the issues of migration	Interview	20/02/2013