



# The dynamics of Ukrainian migration to Greece: Routes, decisions, practices

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# **The dynamics of Ukrainian migration to Greece:**

## **Routes, decisions, practices**

Marina Nikolova

### **Deliverable 7.1**

#### **Case Study: Migration System 2 (Ukraine)**

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## Introduction

### *Aims, Methodology and Theoretical Approach*

The importance of the dynamics of irregular migration is apparent well before one accounts for the broader context, the consequences, or the effects of globalization. The attempt of the current paper is to shed light on questions related to the awareness of migrants regarding the legislation on migration and insurance policies in the selected destination country, Greece, as the two basic legal instruments for the management of labour migration. The aim of the paper is to determine whether migrants are informed on the legislation of the destination country, and the impact of this on the formation of their further plans. The management of irregular migration flows is currently a major priority at the European and national levels. Meanwhile, in public discourse the major issues discussed are the security of the European Union's borders, and the treatment of third country nationals and the protection of their fundamental rights. The economic crisis in Greece has led to an increase in unemployment rates to 26% in 2014<sup>1</sup> and a risk of social exclusion even for Greeks who belong to the middle class. On the one hand there is Greece, a destination country that faces harsh economic problems, and on the other hand, the outbreak of armed conflict in the eastern parts of Ukraine, further highlighting the importance of investigating the issue from different perspectives.

The current analysis focuses on the irregular migration flows of Ukrainians to Greece and attempts to provide answers to the question of their expectations and motivations that shape their plans and whether and how their decisions and actions are influenced by various policies or actors. The purpose of the study is to present an assessment of the impact of migration regularisation policies and insurance policies as they appear from the life stories of Ukrainian migrants in Greece. The term 'irregular migrants' will be used as an interpretation of irregular residence as a result of legislation and regulations that define certain forms of mobility as desirable and legitimate, and others as illegal and non-desirable (Castles, S. et al. 2012).

The initial and most populous flows of economic migrants from Ukraine to Greece date back to the 1990s. With regards to the reasons that led to migration but also features related to the integration of the migrants in the labor markets of the Mediterranean countries including Greece, Ukrainians belong to a broader wave of immigration from post-communist countries that went through a period of transition to free market economies and experienced a democratisation of state structures. In the 1990s, Greece gradually turned into a country receiving immigrants, initially mainly from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Georgia. The first regulations on the legalisation of immigrants were adopted in the Greek legislation in the same period, while a series of measures and bills regulating conditions for migrants' stay and work were adopted over the following decade. The legislation adjusted to the needs of society, but also to the common directives of the European Union that national legislations were required to adopt. Meanwhile, in 2008-2009 Ukrainians begin to return to their country of origin.

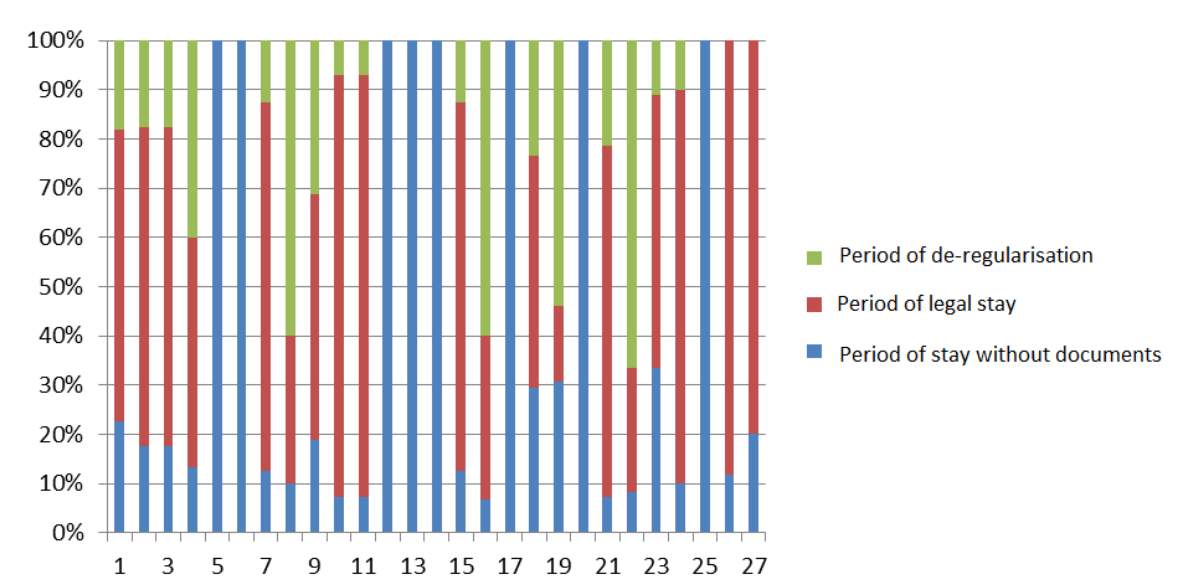
### *Methodological Approach*

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<sup>1</sup> EUROSTAT, Unemployment statistics, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)

For the present study 28 interviews were carried out with Ukrainians living in Greece and another 13 interviews in Ukraine with former migrants in Greece, who have returned to their home country. Some of these interviews were with Ukrainians who have a close relative in Greece. The interviews in Greece took place between September 2013 and February 2014, and the fieldwork in Ukraine was conducted in the second semester of 2014. Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample in Greece, most of the interviewed migrants are women (22 subjects aged 27-61), and six men aged 21-47. The period of stay in Greece amongst the total number of interviewed migrants varies between two and a half and 18 years since their initial arrival in the country. In Ukraine, 11 interviewees were conducted with women aged 23-71 and another two with men aged 18 and 22. Most of the respondents in Ukraine were migrants in Greece and they returned between 2004 and 2013. Four of the respondents have never been in Greece, but they have close relatives in the country of destination in the study.

**Table 1. Overall duration of stay of each interviewee in Greece by different legal status of stay<sup>2</sup>**



In Table 1 we observe that 28% of the sample had never started procedures of regularization, whereas many of the migrants were residing regularly for long periods of time with respect to their total duration of stay. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who were entitled to stay permits for a very short period of time in comparison to their total duration of stay in Greece, is very low.

The fieldwork and the analysis of the interviews follow the ethical issues guidelines that correspond to irregular migration research (Düvell/ Triandafyllidou/ Vollmer, 2008). Regarding the methodology used during the fieldwork, mixed methods were used to approach the respondents (Jandl et al., 2008, Heckathorn, 1997, 2011). In particular, the method of *snowball sampling* was implemented (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981) with some elements of the *time-location* or *time-space sampling* method (Semaan, 2010), as regards the initial ethnographic mapping of the places, where the respondents or

<sup>2</sup> The horizontal axis indicates the coding number of the interview, and the vertical axis refers to the total duration of residence in Greece, which is different for each respondent. But in this case it is interesting to observe the time differences between the periods of different legal statuses – in the table we distinguish between three different periods of diversified legal statuses. The first refers to the initial stay without documents after the expiry of the visa, the second is the period of regularized status and the third is the period of de-regularisation.

the targeted population under research frequently meet and interviews are carried out with community leaders. The fieldwork in Ukraine was completed due to the efficient and valuable support of Iaryna Khomtsii from the Ukrainian National Foundation "Zaporuka".

For the analysis of the interviews we applied the chronological approach of the life course perspective (Bengtson and Allen, 1993, Wingens et al. 2011, Giele and Elder, 1998, Mortimer and Shanahan, 2003) of the respondent, which is appropriate to explain and describe changes that occur in time and relate to temporality. Furthermore, the said approach functions well in order to formulate further research questions and to justify the choice of variables in data analysis (Mortimer and Shanahan, 2003). Data analysis was based on certain assumptions and theoretical perspectives which are briefly mentioned below in the text.

Turning points are the crucial changes affecting societies, the structural system, but also events occurring in the human environment. The interaction that occurs between the system and the agents and the mechanisms of decision-making are further analysed at the micro-level. These turning points can be interpreted as significant events, which can be decisive and then act as engines and benchmarks for certain decisions made by the immigrant. Significant events may involve some changes in the socio-economic environment, which have a direct impact on human life, or some systemic/legislation, which triggers the mechanism for change.

According to Alfred Schuetz (*The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology*) people tend to know the things that concern them, to follow daily practices that create a common code with others who live in the same society. By knowing and using the same codes, and therefore knowing the "recipes" that show a desired effect, the person operates in a given context with safety and predictability, without wondering how and why it works in a way that reflects their own society. For the stranger everything looks different, s/he devises other "recipes" (codes) that lead to the result that s/he wishes to avoid adverse consequences. However, the codes of the so-called 'stranger' are sometimes not effective, due to different cultural norms (cultural patterns). The adjustment of the foreigner to the ways of the group/society, where s/he enters is a continuous process of searching and investigation of the cultural norms, of ways of approaching the group. If successful in this quest, then these cultural patterns become apparent for him/her, and this is what offers security and removes the confusion or the fear with respect to unknown norms and customs (Schuetz, 1944).

Moreover, analyzing issues pertaining to irregular migration raises the following issue: the irregular situation of some immigrants may be temporary or alternate between legal and irregular residence status. Often, immigrants change their legal status of residence, e.g. if one enters the country legally with a visa and then exceeds the duration of his/her visa duration and stays for a period irregularly and then a regularization program is in place and the migrants can lodge an application to regularize his/hers status and then again has legal residence permit (Anderson and Ruhs, 2010), but also falling back to the irregularity due to lack of insurance stamps necessary to renew his/hers residence permit. Alternation between various statuses may be a result of either legislative changes or individual choices, and can even be used strategically by immigrants in order to improve their position (Anderson & Ruhs, 2010).

In the analysis of Ukrainian migration to Greece in relation to decision-making processes, it is important to consider the gender perspective and the variables related to time, e.g. the age of the respondent at different stages of the migration cycle, the generational differences in decision-making processes. On the other hand, the analysis focuses on the government policies on immigration, control, and other policies, such as those related to labour and insurance. The role of the social networks is also considered as decisive in the study and will be examined in the next sections.

The analysis of the interaction between the two elements—the active human factor and the structure/system (agency and structure), could assist in addressing certain questions regarding the nodal points, which are defined as main research question of the project IRMA "Governing Irregular Migration: States, Actors and Intermediaries" (funded by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology through the programme "Aristeia", NSRF 2007-2013, Operational Programme (OP) 'Education and Lifelong Learning' (EdLL). Overcoming the perspective of the nation-state and methodological nationalism, the project identifies the study of the networks of actors and factors as crucial for irregular migration. It explores how public policies interact with these networks at certain nodal points, and how at certain points in time those specific policies are prevailing in importance in the decisions of immigrants (Hatziprokopiou and Triandafyllidou, 2013).

The hypothesis of the project IRMA, also reflected in the current study, is that when a significant event or nodal point occurs in the life of the migrant, his/her intentions and needs can be shaped decisively by the absence or presence of a given policy. The absence or presence of a specific policy does not only refer to the existence or absence of the policy measure. It also refers to the extent to which migrants are aware of this policy, and the ways in which the implementation of management practices makes the policy effective in affecting immigrants. A complex understanding of the political processes, which includes three elements, is adopted: (a) the existence or absence of a specific policy/measure, (b) the application of this policy/measure, and (c) the knowledge of the immigrant on points (a) and (b).<sup>3</sup>

On this basis a few nodal points are defined as instruments for the analysis:

- Potentially Nodal Points (where decisions and actions of immigrants could or would be expected to be affected by a specific immigration control policy).
- Unanswered Nodal Points (where immigrants were not aware of the policy, therefore not affected)
- Ignored Nodal Points (where immigrants were informed, but chose to ignore that information, maintaining their original decision or action plan).
- Actual Nodal Points (where the policy has led to a change of plans and actions of the migrants and their families).<sup>4</sup>

## **Characteristics of the Ukrainian migration to the European Union and Greece**

The migration of Ukrainians began with short term mobility to neighboring countries for suitcase trading, and within a few years developed to migrations for longer periods of time. Eventually, migration meant moving to destination countries at greater distances from Ukraine. Greece is one of the first host countries for Ukrainian economic migrants in the mid-1990s. The economic conditions in Ukraine pushed people in their most productive ages to seek employment abroad. The key drivers were unemployment, low incomes, delays in payments, but also changes in the legislative framework, which allowed the free exit of Ukrainians, such as the abolition of the exit visa system in 1993 (Malynovska, 2004 in Nikolova, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> Hatziprokopiou, P., Triandafyllidou, A. (2013) Governing Irregular Migration: States, Migrants and Intermediaries at the Age of Globalisation, Deliverable 1.1. : Concept Paper, The IRMA Project: Governing Irregular Migration.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

At the time, Ukraine experienced a transition of state policies from repressive during the communist regime to the mobility and migration to policies encouraging the migration of its citizens, according to the typology for the migration policies developed by Hein de Haas and Simona Vezzoli (2011), as this would lead to a reduction of unemployment in the country, while the remittances received by the families of the emigrants would be an additional source of income for the real economy in the 1990s and up to the mid-2000s. Consequently, this study will focus on the interaction between migrants and migration control policies in order to examine whether policies affect the decisions of immigrants. The results of the fieldwork in Greece and Ukraine will be presented below in three sections:

1) Greece as a country of destination – in this chapter the factors that define the country as an option for migration are mentioned, the causes of migration flows in different periods and the factors taken into account by the immigrant before the final decision, as well as the preparation for the journey and the cost of travel.

2) In the second part of the study we will analyze life in Greece and the role of the family and social networks with regards to the employment strategies, insurance policies, regularization procedures and de-regularisation processes, but also drives to restore the legal status of stay.

3) The final chapter refers to tendencies for return and related issues— the gender of the respondents and their generational differences seems to play an important role in the differentiation regarding the concerns in the decision-making process for return.

In the analysis of the policies, the policies of both countries (Greece and Ukraine) were accounted for, both in relation to their goal, but also in relation to their effectiveness. Ukraine implements policies on immigration of nationals (emigration policies), which are summarized as follows:

- Policies at the national level—policies are intended to protect the rights of the country's citizens abroad through diplomatic missions, to enable migrants abroad to actively participate in social and political life of the host country, to design a system for social benefits and customs relief for returnees, to design policies for the integration of the returnees etc., and
- International relations policies - to conclude bilateral agreements with countries including a Ukrainian diaspora by achieving various benefits and rights, such as the transfer of pension rights and insurance years etc. Such agreements were signed with Spain and Portugal from the South-European countries (Jaroszewicz & Kaźmierkiewicz, 2014).

However, migration control policies of Greece are also implemented on two levels, international and national; Policies are implemented on the one hand before entry (visa policies and border control), and on the other there are internal policies related to migration regarding the conditions for issuing a stay permit, the integration of legally residing immigrants, but also control of irregular migration.

The mass migration flows from Ukraine begin in the 1994-1998 period, while in the beginning of the new millennium Ukrainians residing mostly in the south European countries regularize their stay, earn visibility and appear in the population censuses and EUROSTAT, particularly in Portugal, Italy and Greece, where regularization programs were implemented (Nikolova, 2013). Migration from Ukraine to Western Europe continued after 2001, but not as intensively as in the first period, between 1994 and 1998 (Pribytkova 2007). The role of recruitment companies in Ukraine is crucial in that period, as they operated in collaboration with tour operators, and both these actors played the most important role in the migration industry in Ukraine at the time. Greece was one of the first countries that Ukrainians visited with a tourist visa, the duration of which was exceeded, in order to stay for a longer period of time and find work in the informal labor market. A key characteristic of Ukrainian migration to Greece is the strongly prevailing female composition of this nationality, as the women make up over 80% of this group. Until six years ago, Ukrainians were one of the most populous nationalities of migrants in



Greece, but due to the improvement in the social and economical environment in the period of 2007-2008 in Ukraine and, on the other hand, some signs of decline of the Greek economy and the looming economic crisis, the return to the country of origin for many migrants seemed to be a more viable solution.

**Map 1 Migration routes from Ukraine to Greece: 1990-2011**



According to the latest data, the Ukrainian migrants are one of the largest migrant groups in the EU, with more than one million people living in the European Union countries (Leontieva, 2014), of whom 17,000, or 1.7% of Ukrainians in the EU, live in Greece<sup>5</sup>. The most recent data of EUROSTAT regarding the migrants entitled to residence permits for the first time, shows that in 2013, Ukrainians who received a residence permit for the first time in Greece numbered at 885 (or 4.5% of all foreigners who were entitled to residence permits in 2013). Most of the permits were issued for family reunification, which indicates that Greece is still interesting as a country of destination for them. Basically, family reunification is a common means of legal immigration, because European and national legislation on labour migration gives priority to skilled migration and is quite restrictive to third-country nationals in search of other types of jobs<sup>6</sup>.

According to EUROSTAT data, in the same year (2013), Greece ranks second for a number of stay permits issued for the purpose of family reunification. The low percentage of permits issued for employment purposes leads to conclusions related to the economic crisis and that the country is not attractive for labour migrants, and, secondly that Greece is a country that integrates immigrants almost exclusively in low-status jobs and is not attractive for high skilled candidates from third countries.

<sup>5</sup> Census, ELSTAT, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Law 4071/2012, Part B, Chapter 1, Article 22

However, in 2013 Ukrainians remained the third nationality with the largest number of issued residence permits in Greece, immediately after citizens from Albania and Russia<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, one of the primary conclusions is that the family reunification is of significant importance for the immigrants to come legally in the country and be reunited safely with their families, which was not the case until 2006. As regards the available data and the population issues, it should be noted that in 2014, after the outbreak of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, it was observed that the number of new arrivals and asylum applications had not risen, as some had expected might occur as a result of the crisis.

## Analysis of the findings from the fieldwork in Greece and Ukraine

As mentioned above, the interviews in Greece were conducted between September 2013 and February 2014, and in Ukraine in the second half of 2014. With respect to their educational level, most respondents have a university degree or are technical school graduates. The exception to the sample were three men, who were issued expulsion orders and were interviewed in the detention center at Petrou Ralli in Athens: they told us that they came to Greece as minors and attended high school with great difficulties.

During the period surveyed, less than 70% of interviewees were working, while the rest were unemployed or in search of work, while almost everyone was employed before migrating to Greece. In the 1990s, in the years immediately following the collapse of the communist regime in Ukraine, there were delays in payments, hyperinflation, the average monthly wage was 120-150 karbovanets, which the respondents say was indeed "good money then", but most of the people were not paid on a monthly basis or those working in the public sector or in factories lost their jobs. One woman, who was in Greece from 2000 and returned to Ukraine permanently in 2009, says:

*"Why did I go there? The 1990s were difficult years in our country. First of all, we didn't receive a salary, I worked as a teacher and my husband was an engineer. We lived in the village at the time, my husband worked at the collective farm. The collective farm was ruined. After that there were only odd jobs. Salaries were often delayed; sometimes they didn't pay at all. Once they gave us roofing slate instead of money. What will we give our kids to eat? You have to find a truck, take those roofing slates, go to the market to sell it and only then you will get some money". Woman, 46 years old, Lviv*

Two of the interviewees had previous immigration experience: both were in Russia, while one was in Israel before. Some of the interviewees were owners of private companies before they came to Greece in the 1990s, but they couldn't maintain their business. Two of the interviewees had just finished university, got married and came to Greece as the wife's mother was already in the country and encouraged them to arrive. Finally, one of the young men came as a child when he was 13, he was smuggled through Poland and Italy, and in Ukraine he had no relatives and was living in an orphanage, before his mother took the decision to take him to Greece by irregular means.

The majority of interviewees are from the Ukrainian cities of Ternopil, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Kyiv and some other small towns of Western Ukraine, while 14% are from Eastern Ukraine. Most arrived for the first time in Greece at least ten years ago and the recent arrivals are related to family reunification and refer to children who came to stay with their mothers (2005-2006). In one of the cases a woman of

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Interior, Information on residence permits issued, 2013

Greek origin from the city of Mariupol, had initial information that suggested she could be naturalized and be entitled to Greek citizenship under the Law for the repatriates, but she finally discovered that it was impossible and she stayed without documents in the country from 2009 onwards, when she arrived. In another case it appears that the respondent wanted to broaden his "horizons", he was not searching for a job in Greece in particular, but after he got a proposal from a colleague to participate in a dance group in 1991, he came and continued to work in his professional area, but without insurances and consequently remained irregularly until the first regularization programme was implemented.

### ***Decision and preparation to migrate. Greece as a destination and host country***

The decision to migrate and the choice of the country are defined by factors that function at three levels: the macro, medium, and micro (Dimitriadi, 2013). Therefore, the macro-level causes for migration are analyzed through the classical theory for the push factors (from the country of origin) and pull factors (to the host country) and discussion regarding the effects of political, social and international developments. In the middle-level the study examines the factors related to the role of social networks, social and economic capital in each of the phases of migration—preparation of travel, choice of destination country, settlement and finding a job. Furthermore, on the third micro-level the analysis focuses on the individual expectations/inspirations from/for the migration experience and the skills necessary to accomplish it in each of the different phases of the Ukrainian immigration in Greece.

One of the objectives of this section is to examine the result of the policies and their interaction with the other significant factors over the decisions that the immigrants finally take. As noted by De Haas (2011b), it is important to conclude that measures were taken to limit migration e.g. of unskilled people, which would affect the flows considerably, but an important issue is also to compare this development in conjunction with other factors such as economic growth, employment, personal freedoms. Moreover, the approach proposed by de Haas (2011b) also focuses on the capability of the immigrant to migrate and migrants' expectations. Furthermore, the dialectical relationship between the actors (in this case the actors are the agents with their own expectations and drivers for migration) and the social structures operate in dynamic interaction.

Essentially, the approach of de Haas (2011b) argues that there should be more emphasis on factors such as culture, education, access and exposure to different sources of information. These factors are not stable over time, but have a huge impact over: 1) the perceptions of people about what a good life is, and personal expectations; 2) knowledge and vision of what kind of opportunities exist elsewhere (ibid.). According to this hypothesis, de Haas believes that personal expectations for life and awareness of the opportunities that exist elsewhere, rise by improving the level of education and access to information.

Consequently, an important element in the migration process is the decision to migrate and the preparation of the trip. 21% of respondents in Greece said they took their own decision to emigrate without discussing it with the family, while 57% answered that in one way or another, the issue of migration was discussed and decided together with the family. In the latter case, as to the conformity of the family opinion, three cases are distinguished:

- 1) those who were married discussed their decision with their partner, in that case the migration was performed usually by the wife

- 2) the elder women with adult children and grandchildren, may discuss their idea to migrate with their children, since, as is clear from the interviews, no reference in consultation with partner was in place, and, in those cases again it is the woman who performs the migration
- 3) in the third case, usually the mother was already in Greece and she takes the decision or attracts her children in the country of destination.

In order to perform the migration, the immigrants need a minimum level of security, depending on the circumstances in the country of destination and the possibility of legalization and employment, even if there is confirmation from the family left back in Ukraine that if something goes wrong and the person is unable to find employment it is enough to ensure the necessary amount to pay the return ticket home. It is important to note that immigrants have expectations regarding higher salary and not aspirations in relation to the type of work. Sometimes they have no idea about the kind of work they will be obliged to do:

*"I imagined Greece differently. I was thinking about classical Greece with the Greek women in traditional costumes. I imagined it as more joyful. If someone had told me that I should take care of elderly woman, probably I wouldn't go at all, I was a teacher and it is very hard to accept the situation". Woman, 46 years old, Lviv.*

In the case of a 38-year old man from Donetsk, who lives in Athens with his family, they came in 2000 with his wife after the invitation of his mother-in-law who was already living and working in Greece. The family applied and received residence permits during the regularization process in 2001, their children were born in Greece, but because in the last few years the husband is working sporadically and the family budget is insufficient to support their household, in the beginning of the 2013 they decided that it is too much to pay 600 euros to renew their yearly residence permits, they decided to stop renewing their permits and to plan their return to Ukraine. When the interview was conducted, the family was residing in Greece without documents and the conflict in Ukraine had just started, so it is not clear whether they finally left Greece or they remained.

*"We graduated from the University, we got married and we had never worked up until our departure to Greece. In Ukraine it was very difficult to find work; the employers were not paying salaries. Back then we had no internet; we were informed by my mother-in-law. We wanted to come for a couple of years to save some money. Our expectations were high, but in neither way were they justified. All our friends found jobs, built houses in Ukraine. While we live here in 28 sq.m. apartment with the children, they owe me money at work... We didn't find ourselves here... But over the years we managed to help my parents to buy an apartment in my city". Man, 38 years old, Athens.*

In another case, Olya, 55, who was in Greece for seven years between 1997 and 2004, says that before migrating she was working at the Department of technological control of goods in her home town. The wages were low and the employers would constantly postpone the payments, so she decided to go abroad and to find any kind of a job. The godmother of her child was already in Greece for three years and she informed Olya about the life in the country and that she would help her to find a job and a place to stay. "I was confident that someone I trust will help me and will mentor me, so I didn't give it further thought", says Olya (Woman, 55 years old, Radekiv rayon). The existence of the minimum sense of security in the host country encourages the immigrant not only to make the decision, but also to act on it.

Regarding the minimum sense of security, associated with housing and job finding, it is also closely related to the sense of control, that migrants have over their planning during the preparation for migration and their sense that whenever they decide they will return. In the initial phase of the migration cycle, that of preparation, immigrants have a stronger sense of control, which they seem to

lose in Greece. As a result the plans for return seem to become heavily influenced, and when thinking about return a feeling and a fear of possible social and economical exclusion in the country of origin dominates.

An understanding of how decisions are made during the different stages of migration may help in planning policies aimed at return (Koser and McAuliffe, 2013). These conclusions of Koser and McAuliffe consider that the return can be planned better if some additional funding can be purchased to strengthen small business start-ups, or for additional vocational trainings/qualifications. Yet another alternative is benefits offered to returning migrants as part of return programs.

The Ukrainians interviewed in Greece, who arrived in the 1990s, and in between 1996 and 1998 in particular<sup>8</sup> with a visa, travelled to Greece mainly by bus, crossing through Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria to arrive in Greece. The average cost was \$500, including the costs for purchasing the visa and the bus tickets for the trip, although in the package—visa and tickets, the prices range between \$400 and \$800, while only one of the interviewees said that he paid \$1,000.

A woman from Lviv (62 years old, Lvov), who returned to her home town in 2005, reported that before the departure to Greece the recruitment agency organized a seminary for learning elementary daily expressions in Greek, so that potential migrants would have some very basic language skills upon arriving. She knew that the visa was for two weeks and that she would then remain illegally. At that time the price of the trip differed depending on the number of people who stated that they wished to migrate. The relation between the number of people and price of the trip was inversely proportional. In some cases the migrants came with a Schengen visa to Greece (in 1994, 1997, 2000) issued from the embassies of, e.g., Austria or Germany, and then they passed from Italy to Greece by boat. In this case the members of the tourist group were able to choose to stay in Italy or to continue their journey to Spain, Portugal, or Greece.

After 2000, during the second phase<sup>9</sup> of the Ukrainian migration, the cost of travel increases, but the pattern remains the same. Interviewees in Greece, who came in 2000-2003 (40% of respondents), say they paid between \$700 and \$1,300, with most of them having paid \$1,200. One of the interviewees says that he arrived in Greece when he was still a minor (13 years old), and is the only one who entered the country irregularly, without a passport and visa. On his journey in 2006, he went through Poland as a tourist and arrived in Italy concealed in a truck with another three to four people. From there he was provided with a ticket for the ship and arrived in Greece. He did not know any details about the organisation and the cost of the trip as everything was arranged by his mother, an immigrant in Greece. Before that he was living alone in an orphanage because his father had died and there was no one in Ukraine to take care of him. On the trip he was feeling the cold and he was afraid, as he stayed locked inside the truck, concealed among the load it was carrying, without an idea of how long the journey was.

Most Ukrainian immigrants, regardless of the period during which they have migrated, have usually borrowed money from acquaintances or relatives to cover the cost of their journey. Usually, as one of the interviewees describes, she began her journey with a friend, who had arranged the travel documents and tickets, but at the border with Moldova a problem occurred and her friend was returned, she had to get off the bus and go back to Ukraine.

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<sup>8</sup> 40% of interviewees

<sup>9</sup> As regards the different periods of Ukrainian migration, see: Nikolova, M. (2014), ‘Ukrainian Migration to Greece: Patterns and Challenges of Remaining and of Return’ in *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*.

*"They didn't let her enter and it was presumed that she knew how to get by. I was in despair, but I didn't get off the bus and those who were on the bus took care of me and helped me. Everyone on the bus was in the same situation—going to find work. I had no money to repay the debt. I thought that there is no way back, only ahead. My friend said to me "come with me, where would you go, you don't know anything" but I went because I was in debt, I did not work and I had no choice». Woman, 43 years old, Athens*

In the decision to choose Greece as a destination country, social networks usually play a central role. Insofar as recruitment is concerned, the initial information for Greece and how to organize the trip comes from acquaintances or distant relatives. In some cases the choice of country is based on the information and the fact that the issuing of an entry visa was easier at certain periods and, secondly, that they would have some initial help in finding accommodation and employment offered by relatives who were already in the country of destination or arranged by the travelling agency (which in some cases was also a recruitment agency).

As mentioned above, the story of Olia is representative: the godmother of her child was already in Greece and promised to help her find a house and a job. Her family, on the other hand, supported her decision to leave, because they felt that the godmother was trustworthy. Meanwhile Olia's younger daughter had passed exams and earned a place in a higher educational institution in Kyiv, so she needed financial support for her studies (Woman, 55 years old, Radekiv raion).

Thirty-two-year-old Julia tells the story of her mother who lives in Greece. The story has many similarities with other stories of people from the area of Ternopil, where the family of Julia lives. When the mother decided to migrate to Greece, she collected the necessary documents and went to a private travel company, on which the family was not really certain whether it had official permission for the services offered, but "everyone did so and my mom was no exception", Julia says (Woman, 32 years old, Ternopil).

In the 1990s in particular, when there was no access to official sources of information through the internet or non-governmental organizations in Ukraine, to inform potential migrants on the countries of destination, the social networks had a major role in spreading the available information based on personal experiences mostly. Especially in those cases when the potential migrants felt the latent need to search elsewhere for financial resources and did not have many options for becoming informed, they relied on random information from acquaintances. The statement of one interviewee is very illustrative: "At a wedding I met a woman working in Greece, she told me how things are and I decided. We were ready to do anything", (Woman, 58 years old, Athens). Consequently, a conclusion regarding the first period of migration from Ukraine in the 1990s is that immigrants were probably not interested and had no knowledge regarding the policies themselves, but they were up-to-date on the practices of migration.

In the mid-2000s, centers were established in Ukraine, and their aim was to provide accredited and verified information to potential migrants regarding the work conditions, cultural specifics, and possibilities for study in the countries that they are interested in, but also important information on travelling abroad in general. These centers were initially financed by the International Organization for Migration, but since 2005, only one continued to exist. The above-mentioned centre was established in the city of Ternopil, in Western Ukraine, and also provided services through a telephone line open to citizens from all parts of Ukraine. Data provided by the Centre (Nikolova, 2013) indicate that the interest rates of Ukrainians for Greece as a destination country have been significantly reduced. The centre aims to provide reliable information to its customers, in order to support them to take informed decision and to minimize the risks of migration in terms of contact with another culture, awareness-

raising on issues related to life away from family and friends and ignorance of the laws in the host country (Nikolova, 2013).

At this point it should yet again be emphasized that the Ukrainian immigration flows to Greece are already narrow before the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2010. Moreover, a tendency of return to the country of origin is observed. From the interviews with irregular migrants in Greece, comes into sight that most of them live in the country more than ten years, and only 28% have never initiated procedures of regularisation of their status, as opposed to the remaining 72% who had documents usually for working purposes. However, for different reasons that will be discussed below, these migrants became de-regularised.

The interview with Olexyi, a 22-year-old man who had come to Greece for two months, reveals that he is well informed about his obligations against the law of entry and stay in Greece in relation to his case. Olexyi came to Greece in the summer of 2013 with a Schengen visa from the Polish Embassy in Ukraine with six a month duration with the right to stay abroad per two months. He did not want to exceed the duration of the visa and on the 59th day he departed from Greece, a day before the expiry of the visa. Despite the legal ban of working (the visa was issued for tourist purposes), he was working in the tourist industry—he had a close relative in Greece married to a Greek and the family hosted him and he worked in their family business on an island with a developed tourist industry. Olexyi spent 1,300 euros for tickets and visa, he had a pleasant time in Greece and he didn't plan to overstay the duration of his visa, he perceived his trip as a nice experience and wanted to return to Ukraine to continue his studies (Man, 22 years old, Lvov).

One of the issues related to the country of origin and the legal framework relates to the fact that from as early as 2001, Ukraine had initiated bilateral negotiations on visa liberalization with EU countries. A bilateral agreement between the European Union and Ukraine was signed amending the Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on visa facilitation with date of effect of July 1, 2013.

The Ukrainian organization "Europe without barriers", which monitors the procedures of visa issuing of the foreign consulates in Ukraine, reports decreased levels of refusals of entry visas from the Greek consulates in the country. According to their assessment Greece attracts mostly "tourists", "entrepreneurs" and "close relatives", while as a whole Ukrainians are well informed about Greece as a host country due to "well-organized social networks and horizontal communications" (Nikolova, 2013).

**Table 2 Number of visas issued to Ukrainian citizens from seven EU member states in the 2010-2013 period**

	Poland	Germany	Greece	Czech Republic	Italy	Hungary	Spain
2010	432.129	103 003	<b>48 712</b>	113 699	50 367	103 178	27 892
2011	369.893	99 222	<b>64 821</b>	103 307	40 161	122 396	53 049
2012	447.813	100 390	<b>128 865</b>	73 927	44 604	136 257	78 135

<b>2013</b>	517.418	104 800	<b>201 858</b>	78 632	57 344	150 697	104 692
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Source: Migration and Home Affairs, Visa policy, EU

According to current data and field research, Ukrainians are generally well informed about the living conditions and migration patterns to Greece. An assumption based on triangulation of data on three number of visas issued by the Greek consulates in Ukraine, number of residents permits for the Ukrainians in Greece, literature on trends on migratory flows and estimations on the number of irregular migrants as well as conclusions from the interviews conducted during the field research, appears that in the past few years there are no violations of the duration of visas, which lead to irregular stay in the country.

Furthermore, according to Oksana Pyatkovska<sup>10</sup> some key labor market challenges inhibit the intention of Ukrainians to migrate to Greece. These are the high unemployment levels among immigrants (higher than those of Greeks in 2012-2013, reaching 33%), increased long-term unemployment, which reached 59% in 2012, the mismatch between education level and work (26% of the employees have higher educational qualifications than those required by the labor market) and rising unemployment rates among young people. Equally interesting is the finding that although Greece is on 12th place among the EU member states hosting Ukrainian migrants, it is on second place on the scale of remittances sent to Ukraine from the migrants' host countries. According to Pyatkovska's assessment on potential migratory movement towards Greece on the basis of available data and research in Ukraine, the researcher stresses two main possibilities related to family reunification and tourist purposes.

### ***Living and working in Greece***

Most of the interviewees live with their families in rented apartments or in the homes of acquaintances, as they were unemployed and without any financial sources when the interviews were conducted, while the rest of the informants were women living in the homes of the employers as they were working as domestic workers. Statistically significant are the variables of age and sex—the ones living in the homes of their employers are only women aged 50-65 years old. The decision to stay in the employer's home is connected primarily with the nature of work itself, while also preferred by the women, as expenses for rent and overheads are saved. Most young women and their families prefer to rent an apartment in order to have an independence of space and to regulate their time according to their own timetable and wishes. Of course, due to the deterioration of the situation in Greece during the economic crisis, those who fail to find work outside of live-in assistance prefer to leave the country and return to Ukraine, and to re-migrate to Russia.

During the period of the survey, 1/3 of the informants in Greece were unemployed and were looking for a job or planning to return. Without any exceptions, the interviewed women were working as domestic helpers and the men were working in the construction sector (drywall installers, electricians, dyers in construction), with the exception of a male professional dancer, but unemployed in the period when the interview with him was conducted. The young men aged 20-25 years old in most of the cases are working on various occasional jobs. Many of the interviewed women have steady jobs, as

<sup>10</sup> Presentation of Oksana Pyatovska, Researcher at Lviv Polytechnic National University, entitled "Macroeconomic Parameters of Ukrainian Integration into the EU Migration System (the Case of Greece)", during the workshop "Governing Irregular Migration: Balkans and Eastern Europe to EU System», 30 May 2015, Athens.



some of them haven't changed employer or family in which they work, and others have changed three to five employers at most. In the beginning, when they first came, they would find work through job offices against a small amount of money paid for the service of the intermediary, or, through their relatives. Some say they used the services of those offices only at the beginning, and later found jobs through acquaintances. Some came from Ukraine with an oral agreement made with an intermediary agency organizing the travel, that once they arrive in Greece they would have guaranteed job, which was also included in the price of the journey.

*"At the beginning, we found work through the job recruitment agency, later on we met new people and we were finding alone" Woman, 58 years old, Athens*

*"A friend of mine who was here learned about this family that was looking for someone and she told me from day one" Woman, 62 years old, Athens.*

*"Through internet, the newspaper "Hrysi efkairia", with my mom and brother I find most of the jobs. But I am getting informed from different sources" Male, 21 years old, Athens.*

The migrant women working as maids are paid approximately 400-600 euros per month. Half of the interviewees have stopped sending remittances to their relatives in Ukraine and very few said they still send some money to their children. As a conclusion to the above, the residency status doesn't relate to the job search strategies or qualifications that immigrants might have, but are highly related to the existence of social networks. There is a certain pattern and the migrants prefer to rely upon the advice of their acquaintances and contacts within the community, which was also the case in the 1990s. An exception is an interviewee aged 21, who refers to the newspaper "Hrysi efkeria" and the internet as a job search strategy in Athens.

Castles (in de Haas, 2011b) suggests that very often, in industrialized countries, because there are no legitimate ways to import unskilled workers, while there is a demand for workers in jobs without social prestige, systematically is used the labor supply of irregular migrants, who are easy to get exploited because they do not have rights. There are other services that take care of people who require assistance against the cost paid by families to domestic workers for the exclusive care. So where the legal status of the matter was settled through regularization, the financial crisis again once again gave rise to the question of insurance and undeclared domestic work.

The job search is related to expectations about progress in life or with expectations for one's salary. It was reported that finding a job in Athens is easier and is associated with expectations for better earnings as more economically affluent people live in the capital, according to the opinion of a woman who returned to Ukraine in 2005. Another woman who was in Greece until 2009, also says that "when we arrived by bus at Omonia square they warned us not to go outside of Athens to look for work because they we would find worse jobs with less money" (Woman, 46 years old, Lvov). On the other hand, 22-year old Olexyi came to work for a summer in Greece, on an island with a developed tourism industry, and from his stay in Greece he arrived at the conclusion that finding better-paid seasonal work—e.g. as a waiter—rests on knowledge of Greek and English.

For migrants, learning Greek means that they are able to negotiate for salary, to better understand the working conditions on offer and the obligations both for themselves and their employers. In some cases employers have an important role in the lives of immigrants in terms of positive changes and integration. There are cases in which the employers provide books to women working in their homes to help them learn the language and in every way support their language learning efforts. Moreover, in many cases, employers are the ones who encourage and help migrants in the first regularization in early 2000, as displayed in many interviews. And finally, in one of the cases, the employer used

arguments to convince the woman working in her home that the time is ripe for her to return back to Ukraine. In the latter case, after being brought as arguments that, first the immigrant was then holder of a residence permit and could return whenever she wanted to Greece, and secondly that the husband of the immigrant had found a decent job with high salary in Ukraine and finally he was able to support his wife, when she would return, as he did eventually. In these cases, the employers create conditions for support of the developments in the lives of immigrants which the migrants themselves evaluate as positive. These gestures of good will contribute to raising the sense of control over the lives of immigrants, to be back into their own hands, while the loss of that sense of control among immigrants sets the ground for the emergence of social exclusion.

According to estimates, the total number of Ukrainians without documents for legal stay in Greece doesn't exceed 2-3,000 people, mostly considered to be women working as domestic helpers. In the years of economic crisis, it seems that the demand for domestic workers hasn't decreased, but the salaries have lessened and it seems that the contributions to be paid by employers or else withdrawn from the salary of workers, are too expensive for both sides and thus neither the employers nor the migrants consider it beneficial to pay them. The recently introduced system of insurance payments via *ergosimo* is also not functioning well.

The *ergosimo*, or in other words the amount of the salary paid in the form of check, to which the pension and health contributions are added in order to be withheld, worked as a form of payment since 01/01/2012 for occasionally employed workers, in accordance with Articles 20 and 21 of Law 3863/2010 and Article 76 of Law 3996/2011. The relevant provisions were amended by Article 74 of Law 4144/2013<sup>11</sup>. In addition, Piraeus Bank applied an electronic version of the *ergosimo* service via its website, accessible to its customers<sup>12</sup>. The amount deducted for insurance and pension rights is 35% of the total payment inscribed through the *ergosimo*.

The insurance contribution rates are allocated per class of insurance, as follows: 1) For Main Pension 14.45%, 2) For Health Insurance in kind (EOPYY) 4.65% 3) For Sickness & Maternity in cash 0.86%, 4) For Supplementary Insurance (EBRD) 4.32%, employee contribution of 0.72%. These high rates discourage employers to pay additional 35% of the agreed salary, amounting to EUR 500 (as is the average wage for domestic workers) per month, the added insurance rates extend to 175 euros. Usually, the practice shows that the oral agreement between the employer and the domestic helper states that the employer pays a percentage of that money to the domestic helper. Most of the women are near a pension, but for them an investment of money for a pension in Greece seems to be a waste of money, since there is no mutual agreement between Greece and Ukraine on the transfer of insurance and pension rights.

### **Regularisations/De-regularisations**

Almost half of the informants live in Greece from the mid-1990s and entered in regularisation procedures either in 1998 through the programs laid out by the presidential decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997, either by the Law 2910 of 2001. Even in 2005, with the third regularisation law in Greece, the issuing of residence permits showed great delays for months and in many cases foreigners received their stay permits after they had expired, when the time had come to file for renewal. In fact,

<sup>11</sup>[http://www.payroll.gr/2013/12/06/amoibi\\_kai\\_parakratisi\\_asflistikoi/](http://www.payroll.gr/2013/12/06/amoibi_kai_parakratisi_asflistikoi/)

<sup>12</sup><http://www.piraeusbank.gr/el/idiwtēs/trapezikes-ypiresies/e-banking/dimofileis-ilektronikes-trapezikes-synallages/ergosimo>

in 2005 foreigners had to pay a rather high fee of 145 euros for the issuance/renewal of the stay permits without actually ever having them issued on time (Triandafyllidou, 2005). Most Ukrainians managed to preserve their legal status and after a few years of legal stay, they succeeded to acquire long term or ten-year residence permits. The respondents who had come in the 1990s, mostly remained with proper documents for an average of ten years. Those who came in early 2000, succeeded in regularizing their status through Law 2910/2001, while the majority of legal migrants that arrived after 2001, legalizing their status through family reunification based on Presidential Decree 131/2006, which constitutes an act of harmonization of Greek legislation with Directive 2003/86 / EC.

It is argued that the regularization programs are attracting potential migrants who might take the decision to arrive in the country pulled by the possibility of working and living in legal manner in EU country<sup>13</sup>. In the case of the Ukrainian immigration in Greece, some people came before 2001 (when was implemented the second regularization program) and they got legal rights till 2001. Those who arrived after 2001, basically did not come because of a regularization program, the normative aspect didn't had determinant significance for them, but mainly the existence of very close relatives was the main reason for chain migration in the 2000's – many children and adults in different ages came following their mothers. Later on, this trend was captured and reflected by the legislation, so the family members could get regularised by the Presidential decree on family reunification. Only one of the informants, that came at that period states he got stay permit through the regularisation procedures provided by the Law adopted in 2004.

Still, specific in the 1990s is that immigrants come having fragmentary information sourced from acquaintances and very few of the newcomers had distant relative in Greece who offer them shelter in the early days of their stay. Later on, the networks continued to operate, but the main actors changed, as well as the priorities in the reasons for migration. The cost of migration gets higher, the conditions in the host country change, but the way of entry remains the same and the usual pattern is to issue a visa in order to arrive in Greece and not to use illegal means of entry such as smuggling networks.

In many cases irregular migrants were expelled to Ukraine, after police checks on the streets. One of the informants (which is one of the three interviewees who are the exception in the sample due to their legal residence status) stated that at the time she was expelled she was in a relationship with a Greek who after her deportation, followed her in Ukraine and two years after they got married and she managed to return to Greece as his spouse. Until now they are married with two children. Regarding the deportations, interviews were conducted in April 2014 at the Police Department of Petrou Ralli in Athens with Ukrainians that have deportation orders due to irregular stay. Because of the events in Ukraine in the same period, the police had informed all Ukrainians detained for deportation, that they may choose to submit applications for asylum under those circumstances. This new development on the right of asylum was based on a document issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in early March 2014<sup>14</sup>.

According to a story of a migrant turns out that the the documents might get lost by the public services as there is no unified system, which records the cases of each immigrant. While a second issue related to a recent change in the law and seems that the migrants are not informed is related to the new provision in the law which refers to those who renew their stay permits and should be holders of

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<sup>13</sup> Resolution 1568 (2007)1, Regularisation programmes for irregular migrants, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Παράγραφος 7 <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/Eres1568.htm>

<sup>14</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Protection Considerations related to developments in Ukraine, 5 March 2014, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5316f7884.html>

health book<sup>15</sup> or should have health insurance from private company and it is not enough to be paid through *ergosimo* (JMD 30825/2014, Article 1, Renewal of residence permits, Paragraph 4).

Regarding the regularisation laws and the procedures of issuing stay permit for the first time, the informants said they got informed mostly by newspapers and many of them confessed that they were encouraged or informed by their employers. The reliable sources of information are changing according to the judgment of immigrants and depending on the issue for which they want to be informed for. That is, when it comes to the migration from Ukraine to Greece the people got informed at the beginning from random persons which they know, while being in Greece they mention that they got information on the regularisation programs from the media (television or ethic printed media such as Russian-speaking newspapers that were distributed at the time) or from their employers, but not so often by acquaintances. This indicates that the reliability of the information were more important regarding the regularisation procedures, while the information itself was important in the case of immigration to Greece. Most of the immigrants lodged their documents for stay permits for the first time alone or with the help of their employers or other Greek friends. Often is referred that to renew their documents they used the services of a lawyer, because otherwise they were losing a lot of time and it was more complicated.

*"I had documents eight years, in the last four years I don't pay. We are not entitled with pension rights, I don't want and I don't have money to spend on that" Woman, 58 year old, Athens*

*"I've received documents for the first time in 2000 if I remember correctly, but after they (the employers - AN) didn't pay my Social Security and I closed the books. I was always working as live-in, the employers didn't want to pay. And if I pay by myself, I would have 400 euros remained at the end of the month." Woman, 65 year old, Athens*

*"Then when I arrived I didn't know, I didn't expect that a regularisation law is going to be implemented. But when it happened, I filed my documents." Woman, 42 year old, Athens*

*"R: You didn't had documents in 1996, did you expect that a regularisation law will be voted;  
I: Well, it was logically expected, it was not possible that we were so many migrants here and not have security, something ... we all thought that a law will be voted.*

*R: And how you were getting informed then – regarding the law, what generally happens;*

*I: On television, newspapers, of course.*

*R: From lawyers;*

*I: No, no, there were no lawyers." Woman, 49 year old, Patra*

*"I do not remember exactly - from TV, from acquaintances. Then on the TV they were screaming that a law on illegal immigrants is coming (in '96). The first time I filed without a lawyer, and then when I had to renew my stay permit it was easier not to run by myself and I hired a lawyer (ie '98 -'99)." Man, 45 years, Athens.*

As regards the expectations of the immigrants and their actual experiences in Greece (e.g. life, work, income and integration) the younger ones, aged between 27 and 38 years, reply that they had high expectations that were not fulfilled. Older women, who have come earlier (in the 1990's or early 2000) and have experienced the economic crisis in Ukraine at an age at which they were working there and already had started a family, they reply they had no expectations and did not expect to "live in a palace". Their purpose was to have a job and be able to send remittances to support their families and particularly children. Children who came after encouragement of their mother and currently aged 21-38 years have completed either university or technical schools in Ukraine, had the expectation that they could be employed to better jobs in Greece and integrate into society. They hoped to have the

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ika.gr/gr/infopages/downloads/mitrwo.pdf>

financial and emotional support on site from the mother while they hoped to save enough to buy a house in their home country.

*"We were desperate, so we had one and only thought – where to go, and we didn't expect that we will stay in a "palace". It is good here, but now I am unemployed". Woman, 49 year old, Athens*

*"What were your expectations for Greece?"*

*Neither expectations nor nothing I had. I didn't know what job I'm going to do". Woman, 60 year old, Athens*

*"We wanted to come for a couple of years to save money. Expectations were high, that weren't justified. Great disappointment. I regretted that we came!" Woman, 36 year old, Athens*

*"R: Do the conditions in Greece correspond to the information you had before the trip?"*

*M: No, because we didn't find ourselves here. All our friends were able to have a decent job, to buy a house in Ukraine. While we live here in 28 square meters apartments together with our children, my employers owe me money." Man, 38 years old, Athens*

*"The situation in Greece doesn't correspond to the information I had. There is no possibility to advance here. I can't do what I want, what I like. I should wring myself doing jobs that I don't like. My expectations were higher than things are in the reality." Woman, 27 years old, Athens*

*"I didn't know how things are going to be, I was simply migrating to make money for my family." Woman, 60 years old, Athens*

Most of the informants interviewed in Greece have their closest family in the host country. It was pointed out that generally speaking the Ukrainians don't aspire to come to Greece for employment purposes, but only for tourism. Many have the habit of chatting via skype with their relatives and say that they keep them informed of the situation. The immigrants who came in the 1990s, knew from the beginning of the journey that they would remain undocumented and they were afraid of being arrested and what may happen to them in prison or what are the possible consequences for the family.

According to Sen (1997) what matters are the options of how human capital will be used (skills, knowledge, effort) Sen (1997) claims that in order to comprehend the role of human capabilities it is necessary to analyze how they are directly related to the perception for good life and freedoms, as well as to explore their indirect impact on economic production and social change. It is interesting to apply this theory to the case of the Ukrainian immigration in Greece from a few aspects.

First, the way in which migration occurred in the 1990s, immigrants knew that after the expiry of their visa, they will stay in Greece without stay permits. It is important to point out is that at the time the national migration legislation was not as advanced as the situation demanded, undocumented immigrants were still almost indifferent to the law as the law was indifferent to them, their number was still small and immigration was a new social phenomenon, so quite a long time passed until the issue was regularised by the law. But the very act of the legislative regularisation features there was incentive and intention on the part of the state to make the change and integrate them legally in society. Namely, this migratory movement, regardless of the reasons for which it has arisen, had an economic and social impact in both countries, and this kind of dynamic nature of migration was recognized and imprinted in the Greek legislation.

Moreover, in the first phase of migration, what appears more significant are on the one hand the skills and the personal effort to required to migrate, and on the other whether the migrants that came in the second period of Ukrainian migration (in 2000s) are mainly influenced by the developed social networks and policies, although they seem to have equally high capacities for migration, but also some knowledge from close relatives regarding conditions in Greece. It seems that newcomers had

expectations that were unrealistically high, and these were mainly created because their relatives—migrants themselves who came to Greece in the 1990s—arrived with low expectations and managed to earn a job, to earn much better money for the given period that they had estimated and to get regularized status through the legal procedures.

The observed changes in the last years are related to the different planning and approach to migration by young Ukrainians. Their ideas are indeed less demanding regarding the financial benefits from migration, as their expectations are associated mostly with statements related to the very experience they would get from the life in a different country and temporary work abroad (although this was also a plan of the immigrants who came in earlier phases). In practice, they perceive more “airily” the unskilled work they do for a while, and then they return to Ukraine and continue working in order to meet their goal, which may be related to professional realization in the field in which they graduated from university or further education.

### **Implication and results of the migration policies**

The present part of the report attempts to make a short assessment related to the effectiveness and the effect (De Haas/Vezzoli, 2011) of the migration policies of control and integration implemented in Greece and evaluated as significantly influential for the Ukrainian migration.

#### **- Policy/Law: Entry and visa policies**

**Implementation:** Entry and visa policies under the current legal framework "On entry and residence of foreigners in Greece", refer to: 1) Short-term visits, in that manner the relevant provisions of the common European policy on visas apply, 2) Entrance in Greece with a view to long-term stay—governed by national legislation.

**Measuring Effectiveness:** The data of the European Union website on the number of visas issued per year and the type of visas issued, originates from the consulates of EU member states. Moreover, monitoring reports regarding the issued visas and the procedures followed by the consulates of the EU member states in Ukraine including the Greek consulate edited and published by the Ukrainian organization Europe without barriers. Recent reports on Greek consulates in Ukraine, published by the NGO Europe Without Barriers, show an increase in the number of visas issued in 2013, a decrease in the number of refusals and a significantly reduced number of documents required for the issuing of the visas.

**Effect:** In the last years no violation of the duration of visas is observed. The practice of violating the duration of the entry visa was widespread since the early 1990s, and up until the mid-2000s. However, this change relates to the reasons most Ukrainians currently visit Greece (e.g. tourism, new experiences, family reunification).

#### **- Policy/Law: Regularisation programs implemented in 1998 and in 2001**

**Implementation:** The above-mentioned policy aimed to provide stay permits to irregular migrants and was implemented periodically (1998, 2001, 2005 and 2007) and for a limited time period. It came into force for certain periods of time, but potentially has long-term effects.

**Measuring Effectiveness:** Data from the Ministry of Interior for the number of migrants and their nationalities, granted stay permits through these programs.

**Effect:** On one hand it has fulfilled its purpose as a policy, and on the other hand, has a positive effect on the integration of the immigrants in the country. They acquired residence and work permits, which they could renew every year and later on many acquired the right to receive long-term permits. So it acts as a kind of “stepping stone” policy.

- **Policy/Law: Presidential decree on family reunification 131/2006, Harmonization of the Greek legislation with Directive 2003/86 / EC**

**Implementation:** Since the entry into force has been integrated in the immigration legislation and has long-term effects.

**Measuring Effectiveness:** Data from the Ministry of Interior

**Effect:** Positive, as the migrants can take decisions about their future being in the same place with their family, the migrants are able to reunite with their children without putting in danger their lives.

- **Policy/Law: Long term stay permit – Presidential Decree 150/2006**

**Implementation:** The implementation of the certain measure delayed. Essentially, it was activated by the enactment of the Migration Code. Basic requirements are long term legal residence, income criteria and social security rights.

**Measuring Effectiveness:** Data from the Ministry of Interior on stay permits. There are no studies on the effect of this policy.

**Effect:** Migrants have the right to move and work legally in all European countries. Second generation migrants also have the right to obtain long term stay permit given that their parents resided in Greece for years legally and they themselves have graduated from compulsory education in Greek schools.

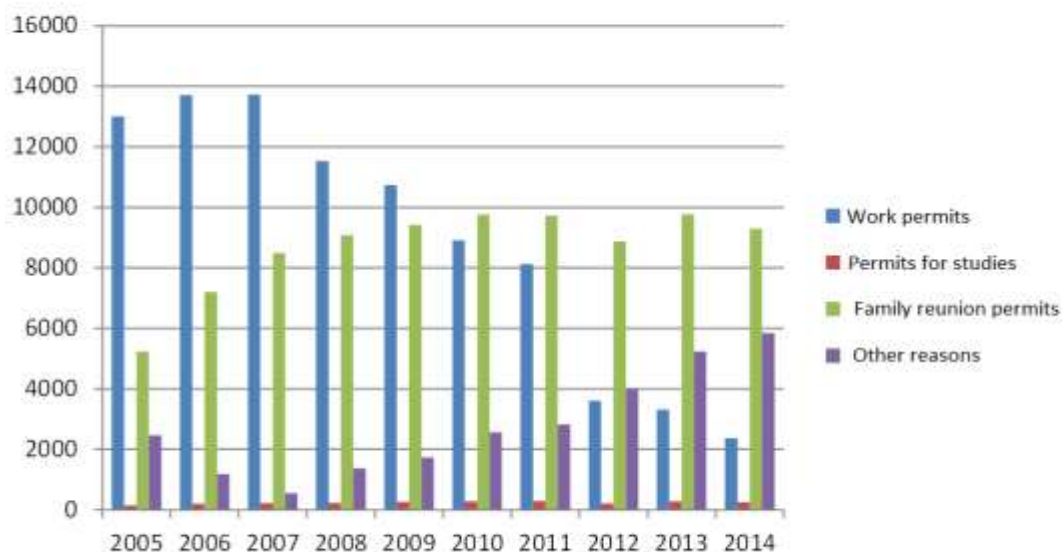
- **Policy/Law: Residence permit for exceptional reasons (Article 19, Migration Code)**

**Implementation:** According to the abovementioned provision of the law, the stay permit may be granted for exceptional reasons. Article 19 of the Immigration Code aims to regularize and legalize the foreigners who came in Greece after 2005, after the last regularization program. To consider the request of the applicant for a permit for exceptional reasons, which is valid for a year, the migrant needs to provide any of the following documents: (a) visa issued by Greek consular authority at least three years before the application for the certain permit; or, (b) a residence permit, even if it has expired; (c) a valid passport; (d) a fee of EUR 300; or, (e) documents showing that the person has developed special ties with the country, a necessary step in order to remain on Greek territory.

**Measuring Effectiveness:** The provision is quite recent. The data of residence permits of the Ministry of Interior is the legal source for monitoring. Permits for exceptional reasons and for humanitarian reasons are granted to 95 migrants from Ukraine until January 23, 2015 according to Mol.

**Effect:** No available data and evaluations due to the short time of the resolution of the law.

**Figure 1. Stay permits per type for the period 2005-2014**



Source: Greek Ministry of Interior

The statistics of the Ministry of Interior for residence permits indicate sharp decrease of the number of permits for reasons of employment and increase of the number of permits for other reasons, which category includes the number of issued long-term stay permits. The number of permits for family reunification remains steadily high since 2008 and shows that nearly half of the permits issued in Greece for family reunification purposes are issued to citizens of Ukraine.

### **Return to Ukraine**

The tendency of return of Ukrainian migrants already appears from 2007 onwards while the flow of newcomers is declining. The return may be voluntary, or forced through expulsion from the Greek police. The key factors affecting return are a relative improvement and stabilization of the economic situation in Ukraine at the time and also the first signs of the economic crisis that erupted in Greece, which mostly influenced men working in the construction sector. The circumstances have changed on a global scale and the Ukrainians are better informed about employment opportunities in other European countries. Meanwhile, in Ukraine the free market economy has transformed the country and as a result people have developed different expectations of a possible migration, when compared to the previous generation of migrants.

The main reasons for return to Ukraine, as evidenced by the research of the NGO La Strada in 2010, are the following: 23% of the people returned for each of the following three reasons: 1) because they reached their aim, 2) family reasons and 3) due to the economic crisis. A smaller percentage (19%) answered that they returned due to health reasons, while 8% felt nostalgia for their country and 4%



received a better job in Ukraine<sup>16</sup>. It turns out that most of the returnees have valid residence permits in Greece.

The data on non-voluntary return according to the statistics of the Greek Police show that in the period 2007-2012 a total of 752 people from Ukraine are arrested for illegal entry and stay are arrested, which corresponds to 0.1% of the people arrested on these grounds. The expulsions of Ukrainians on grounds of illegal residence in the country for the period 2007-2012 are 326, or 0.3% of the deported foreigners, i.e. assumed that half of the arrested Ukrainians for illegal residence are deported.

The field research generally reveals the desire to return, but it differs in terms of how migrants perceive and plan the return and therefore the duration of time that passes from the appearance of the idea that the time has come to return until the decision to actually return, so the interim period may last long. When the field research begins in Greece in the same period demonstrations began on the central Maidan square in Kiev, and a few months later the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted.

Some people are hesitant to return as they live in Greece for years and they have the fear of social exclusion and non-successful reintegration in Ukraine, as they feel their migration experience to be a failure. They estimate that they failed not only in economic terms, but also to achieve personal satisfaction and fulfillment. A family had managed to buy the apartment for the parents of the husband, but they believe that "they couldn't find themselves in Greece" and they took a decision to return one year before the interview took place. They were still in Greece already without documents as they don't have sufficient financial means to renew their stay permits for the four members of the family. At the time of the interview both of them were for a long time unemployed, the husband was working only a few days per month in construction, both having graduated from higher technical schools. The comparison with their friends in Ukraine, "who have done better than them", leave them frustrated on the decision they took to emigrate.

The youngest informers are planning their return in short term periods and state they wouldn't migrate to another country, but would return to their home in Ukraine. Women aged 58-62, who work as domestic helpers in most cases, say they would go back home when they feel that they wouldn't be able to work anymore.

The Ukrainians in Greece say they wouldn't advise anyone to come to work in the country. Women having their children in Ukraine also don't expect and advise their children to follow them, which was not the case a few years ago. Most of the mothers that had left their small children back in Ukraine succeeded to get them in Greece after the presidential decree on family reunification in 2006.

The informers in Ukraine—former migrants—feel more positive when it comes to advising someone on whether or not to go to Greece. Regarding the plans of the young people without family responsibilities who have returned to Ukraine after a short stay in Greece, they say they do not preclude a possible new migration abroad because of the situation in Ukraine and because they consider better the living standards abroad (as an example they tend to prefer migration to Austria, Germany, Norway, but also to Greece).

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<sup>16</sup> Presentation of Oksana Pyatkovska, researcher in Lviv Polytechnic National University, entitled "Macroeconomic Parameters of Ukrainian Integration into the EU Migration System (the Case of Greece)" during the workshop "Governing Irregular Migration: Balkans and Eastern Europe to EU System" in the framework of the project IRMA "Governing Irregular Migration: States, Actors and Intermediaries" on 30 May 2014 at Europe Direct Office - City of Athens.

It is interesting to present the view of the 32-year-old daughter of an immigrant. She has never been in Greece and knows the country through the stories of her mother.

*"You can ask me again, why my mom doesn't leave this hard work? There is a simple answer. There is a crisis now in Greece and it is very difficult to find a new job. Many Ukrainian women return home because of that. My mother often tells me about that when calling home. But there is very different attitude to work in Greece when compared to Ukraine. The Greeks, for example, do not hesitate to sweep the streets, and Ukrainians are ashamed to be cleaners. In Greece it is very important that you have a job and no matter what kind of work you do. But if you don't have a job, that is a shame." (Woman, 32 year old, Ternopil*

Anastasia, 62 years old, has returned to her home town—Lvov—after ten years in Greece. She migrated in 1995 for economic reasons and her husband didn't follow her, as he refused to migrate. Her opinion is that many women felt superior to men, because they "were the breadwinners", sending money to their families for years, and ended up losing their essential relation to their family. Meanwhile, family members started viewing them as "money bags". Anastasia's husband started a new job in 2002, after being unemployed for a few years, and up until then Anastasia had to send remittances in order to cover his living and the expenses of the house. In 2005 the employer Anastasia urged her to decide and return because she said that this is the time to make this important decision and to realize that her husband could financially support his family already and didn't need his wife to stay away for economic reasons.

*"My employer insisted that I should return. I had a stay permit and I could continue my work, but she advised me not to do it. I thought about it and I made my decision" (Woman, 62 years old, Lvov).*

On the other hand, her husband told her that he would do anything to have her near him. To support the decision of return must be the right conditions so that the migrant would feel vindicated for his return, keeping in mind the years s/he spent abroad and away from the family in cases of transnational families. There must be an effort from the opposite side for succeeding in the common goal—whether it would be to recreate viable conditions to live together, whether it is another goal, such as the graduation of a child from the university and s/he would in a position to be economically independent.

## Concluding remarks

In the first years of the Ukrainian migration the reasons were mainly economic, such as the search for better job opportunities, while at a later stage family reunification is the main reason to migrate to Greece. For the majority of Ukrainians, Greece is the first country of immigration and one third of the interviewees (older women working as domestic servants) have never had documents, because they felt that it is not worth getting in a regularization procedures since they will never have rights to get retired.

Some of the interviewees had relatives in Greece before starting their journey, but the majority of them fled without knowing anyone, usually inspired by the idea of a friend/acquaintance already living in the country. Most borrowed the money for the trip, which costs between 600 and 1500 euros through tourist services providers and covers bus tickets and visa. Almost all of the interviewees came to Greece with visa and followed the route via Moldova, Romania and then Bulgaria in order to arrive in Greece.

As for the differentiation with respect to gender-determining factor, arises that the women take the first step and take the decision to migrate either consulting the family or not. Men seem to either follow their wives afterwards or are from the beginning migrating altogether with their family, while in the case of young men, they have come as minors either irregularly either through the possibility of family reunification with their mothers. The situation regarding the return differs, where the opposite is true in relation to gender and the decision - usually the man is the one who takes the initiative and decides for a sustainable return and how the plans will be realized.

Moreover, another difference concerning the decision making with regards to the initial migration and the return seems to be the time that lags between the decisions to migrate/to return and the implementation/realisation of the plan. That is, while the time difference between deciding to migrate and actually migrating from Ukraine to Greece seems to be very small, it is not the case with return; the thought of return is there, but it takes a major event that will cause/trigger return. Return must be better planned if it is to be permanent. Migration seems to be perceived as temporary and emergent, and in specific to last less then it actually does, and, probably for that reason it is not initially planned so carefully and seems to be more impulsive. Usually, the, important factors affecting the decision on return are determined by the differences in terms of different generations, gender, social networks, the legality of stay.

Over the years it appears that migration patterns are changing and currently the new generation have more "light" migratory plans regarding the length of stay abroad (less time) and to their migration projects that would generate direct economic profit. In contrast, ten years ago, migrants were leaving with "heavier" migratory projects requiring longer stay in the destination country to carry out. For most of them, the purpose was to send money regularly for everyday needs of the family (without a time limit planned for return), or for the studies of a child that may be studying in another city, or to save for buying a property.

In many cases, the women working for years in Greece as maids still support their children left behind in the country of origin. In recent years the young people may come to stay a few months and then prefer to go back. It seems that their goal and priority is to have the freedom to choose and be socially integrated. The trigger for a longer stay abroad might be to find good job, to study, and when it comes to seasonal and/or job which do not require knowledge of the language or qualifications, then it is considered as a temporary situation, as it is also legally defined as such meaning the seasonal character of the work, and quickly return without overstaying their visa.

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