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Immigration in Greece: Overview and perspectives

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Η Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: επισκόπηση και προοπτικές

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ABSTRACT

The present paper examines immigration in Greece over the past two decades. Economic immigrants in Greece, despite the absence of reliable official data, exceed one million, while immigration has led to the development of policies relating to the planning and implementation of a coherent immigration policy centered on the legalization and the integration of immigrants in the Greek society. This necessity stems from the twenty year old existence of immigration in Greece as well as from a series of developments affecting core public policies such as education, employment, income, social insurance, health care, residence, legalization and integration of immigrants.

Nonetheless, it should be pointed out, that the size and the complexity of the phenomenon requires the development of a coherent policy that will in turn enhance effectiveness in tackling the social, economic, and political aspects of immigration. In addition, the role of immigrants in society, the labor market and the economy constitutes a further point towards that direction.

KEYWORDS: Immigration, Greece, population, labor market, households, discrimination, income, immigration policy, refugees, asylum

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το παρόν άρθρο εξετάζει το μεταναστευτικό φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα κατά τα τελευταία είκοσι χρόνια. Πράγματι, οι οικονομικοί μετανάστες στην Ελλάδα, παρά τις ελλείψεις που παρουσιάζουν τα επίσημα στατιστικά στοιχεία, υπερβαίνουν το ένα εκατομμύριο ατόμων και το μεταναστευτικό φαινόμενο στην χώρα αποτελεί ένα σημαντικό πεδίο ανάπτυξης πολιτικών αναφορικά κυρίως με τον σχεδιασμό και την υλοποίηση μιας ολοκληρωμένης μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής με άξονα την νομιμοποίηση και την ένταξη των μεταναστών στην ελληνική κοινωνία.

Η αναγκαιότητα αυτή προκύπτει από την εικοσαετή ύπαρξη του μεταναστευτικού φαινομένου στην Ελλάδα και από τις εξελίξεις που συντελούνται στο συγκεκριμένο φαινόμενο, αναφορικά με την εκπαίδευση, την απασχόληση, το εισόδημα, την κοινωνική ασφάλιση, την υγεία, την κατοικία, την νομιμοποίηση και την ένταξη των μεταναστών τα οποία βρίσκονται στον πυρήνα των δημόσιων πολιτικών.

Όμως αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι το μέγεθος και η πολυπλοκότητα του μεταναστευτικού φαινομένου απαιτεί την άσκηση δημόσιων πολιτικών με ένα τρόπο συνολικό και όχι μερικό και αποσπασματικό, ο οποίος αποδυναμώνει, σε σημαντικό βαθμό, την αποτελεσματικότητα στην αντιμετώπιση των κοινωνικών, οικονομικών και πολιτικών παραμέτρων της μετανάστευσης. Πράγματι, προς την κατεύθυνση αυτή συνηγορεί, εκτός των άλλων, και η σημασία του ρόλου των μεταναστών στον πληθυσμό, στο εργατικό δυναμικό και γενικότερα στην ελληνική οικονομία.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ: Μετανάστευση, Ελλάδα, πληθυσμός, αγορά εργασίας, νοικοκυριά, διακρίσεις, εισόδημα, μεταναστευτική πολιτική, πρόσφυγες, άσυλο

1. Introduction

The dimensions of the phenomenon of migration and its growing trend on both the international and European level¹ gives migration a permanent and durable nature. Hence, public policy should treat migration as a challenge and not a threat.

Within this international and European framework of developments, Greece is changing from a “country of origin” to a “host country,” due to its geopolitical proximity (adjacency to the Balkans and crossroads for migrants traveling from East to West)².

As a result, there are presently over one million immigrants in Greece (estimated at 1,100,000), accounting for 10% of the country’s population.

The twenty-year wave of immigration taking place in Greece highlights the need for forming and implementing an effective policy that will cover the following areas³:

- i. The educational and social structures of the country
- ii. The structure of Greek economy and labor market
- iii. The deficiencies in the organization of the Greek state, which have made the country appear unprepared to face the challenges of immigration⁴.

Fulfillment of the above mentioned conditions requires⁵:

- i. Sufficient and reliable statistics that allow for deeper comprehension of the migration phenomenon from both a qualitative and quantitative standpoint.
- ii. The development of a “reception” and integration system for the migrants, and the creation of a policy that will promote their legalization. A significant number of immigrants (50%) work without social, labor, wage and trade union benefits.
- iii. Improvement upon an incomplete system of administrative organization, which is responsible for the absence of official reliable statistics that underscore the real situation of migrants at the time of the four legalization programs (1997, 2001, 2005, 2007), and which will allow for the effective management of migrant integration.
- iv. The facilitation of repatriating Greeks living abroad, the majority of whom are returning from Eastern European countries. Their situation is exacerbated mostly because of deficient state preparedness and an administrative framework that does not allow for effective management of immigrant integration into the Greek economic sector.

Based on this data, the planning and implementation of policies that ensure the essential integration of migrants in the economic and social developments that are taking place on the national and European level constitutes an important aspect of the effectiveness and reliability of migration policy.

The migration policy regulating the demand for and contribution of the labor force is a part of political-economic growth and labor management, and in combination with technological reforms and innovations, it contributes to the improvement of the quality of the production process in critical sectors and branches of the Greek economy⁶.

From this standpoint, the size and the complexity of the migration phenomenon requires that public policies be designed and carried out in a comprehensive manner, so that the issues of development, employment, social integration, and exclusion of the migrant workforce⁷ are handled at the national and regional level.

On the other hand, the parameters that determine the migratory policy and the integration of immigrants, such as education, employment, income, residency, etc. should be integral aspects of public policy.

Public policies should provide strategic approaches to face the challenges of migration and not be limited to haphazard approaches leading to a partial and fragmented response to the migration phenomenon.

More specifically, the weak presence and limited extent of institutional accountability, coupled by the structuring and expression of social demands at the state level, as well as an unstable and splintered legal framework, and laxity in the enforcement of legal regulations, significantly hampers effectiveness in dealing with the social, economic, and political parameters of migration. At the same time, phenomena of lawlessness are created, which relativize the manner in which first and second-generation immigrants perceive the way that institutions in the “host country” operate. Such phenomena also impact the way immigrants respond to the administration and its laws⁸.

Within this framework of recent developments, the wave of migration in Greece from 1990 and on has affected aspects that concern not only the growth, population and labor market, but also the social and cultural structure of the country, as well as the changes taking place within the immigrant population itself and migrants’ degree of adaptation to Greek society. This present report’s contents are geared mostly towards the study of the Greek population and migrants, migration and the labor market, migrants’ income, refugees in Greece, and migration policy in Greece and the E.U.

2. Population and Immigration

The presence of migrants in Greece is continuously growing. In 1991 there were 167,000 migrants living in Greece, in 2001 (according to data from the population census) the figure rose to 797,093 persons (54.5% male and 45.5% female), and by 2007 this figure is estimated to have reached 1,247,000 individuals.

Table 1: Estimate of total migrant stock in Greece, 2007

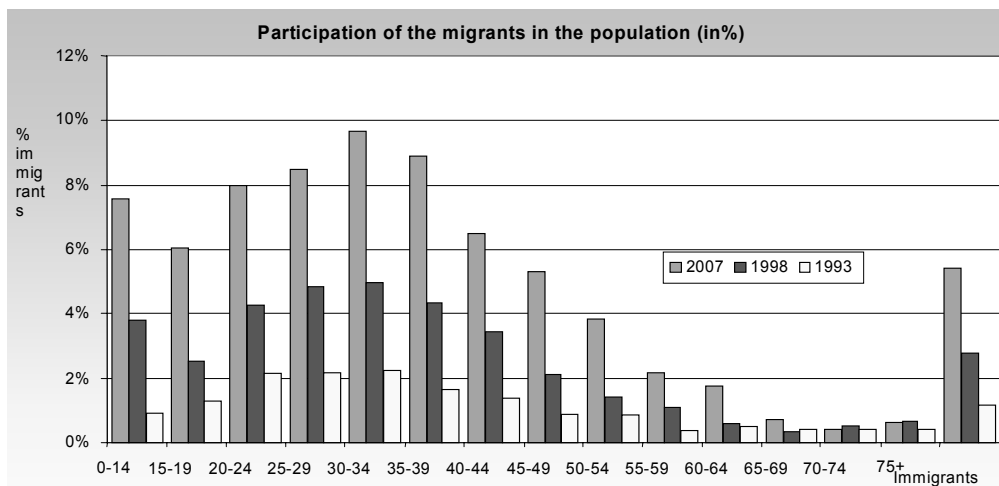
	Members	Source of data
Valid stay permits	480,000	Ministry of Interior, valid permits on 15 October 2007
Estimate of stay permits being processed	250,000	Ministry of Interior, November 2007
Estimate of Greek expats from Albania holding special Identity Cards (EDTO)	200,000	Ministry of Interior, quoted in the press, January 2007
Greek expats from the former Soviet Union (having received Greek citizenship)	150,000	Census of General Secretariat for Repatriated Greek expatriates, 2000
Irregular migrants	167,000	Author’s own estimate
Total including Greek expats	1,247,000	Author’s own estimate
Total excluding Greek expats	1,000,000	Author’s own estimate

Source: A. Triandafyllidou – M. Maroufouf : *Immigration towards Greece at the eve of the 21st Century*, ELLIAMEP, Athens 15 January 2008.

The effect of migrants on the changing demographics of the Greek population is important, given that its contribution to the natural population increase is high. Of course, this is augmented by the relative youth of migrant peoples in Greece and other European Union countries – the frequency of births is higher than the frequency of deaths – and supported, albeit partially, by statistical findings concerning the births attributed to foreign nationals (M. Dretakis, 1999).

In fact, the number of migrants in Greece has increased by 3.5 percentage units in 2007 as compared to 1993, and by 2.1 percentage units as compared to 1998.

Chart 1



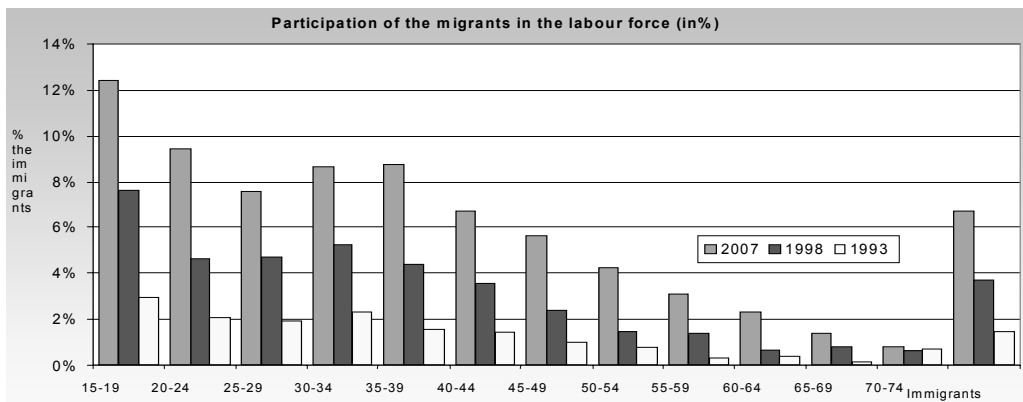
Source: Service National de Statistique en Grece, *Enquete de la main-d'œuvre, 1993 (annuelle), 1998 & 2007 (B' trimestre)* Athenes. (Elaboration statistique par G. Kritikidis, INE/ GSEE-ADEDY, Athenes 2008)

Moreover, in 2006, the population of migrants in age groups 49 years old and younger was proportionately higher in relation to the population than the corresponding general average⁹. In 2007, a higher proportion of migrants in relation to the general population appears in age groups 44 years old and younger. This observation means that, like other European Union countries,¹⁰ the average age of the migrant population in Greece is also increasing by the year.

According to the statistics in the labor force, (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2007) 330,000 migrants are included (men and women), among the working-aged population, and they constitute 7% of the country's labor force.

The immigrant workforce consists mostly of men (90% of the active migrant population). On the other hand, the percentage of migrant women workers in the active population does not exceed 60%, and four out of every ten immigrants included in the nation's labor force are women.

Chart 2



Source: Service National de Statistique en Grece, *Enquete de la main-d'œuvre, 1993 (annuelle), 1998 & 2007 (B' trimestre)* Athenes. (Elaboration statistique par G. Kritikidis, INE/GSEE-ADEDY, Athenes 2008)

The development of the migrants' representation in the general population is proportional to their total participation in the national workforce (Chart 2). However, this increase is more pronounced in the labor force, and by 2007 it was up 4.3 percentage units in comparison to 1993, and 1.7 units in comparison to 1998.

These developments related to immigrant representation in the general population and workforce prove the importance of their contribution to the Greek economy – particularly if they work and live in Greece legally and are integrated into the labor market and Greek society.

At the same time, the observed growth of the migrant population of Greece seems to have tapered-off, as is the case with other European Union member states as well¹¹. Indeed, during the period 1991-2001, the average annual immigrant influx to Greece was 683,000 migrants or 6.2 migrants per 1000 residents. By 2002-2004, it was 3.3 migrants per 1000 residents (a reduction of 47%), and it has been forecasted (Eurostat 2004) that by 2010 there will be only 1.4 migrants per 1000 residents (a reduction of 56% in the rate of immigration)¹².

2.1 The households of immigrants

According to a study of Family Budgets by the National Statistical Service of Greece for 2004-2005, the total number of economic migrant households in Greece are 188,723, and account for 4.7% of the total number of households nationwide, listed at 3,992,964. The separation of Greek and non-Greek households is based on the citizenship of the head of the household. An immigrant household is identified as one where the chief provider is a migrant. Most immigrant households (31.5%) have 4 members, while households with three members constitute 26.2% of the group. One-member households constitute 10.6%, five-member households 11.5%, and six-member households 4% of total immigrant households¹³.

Immigrant households average 3.3 persons per household, in comparison to an average of 2.7 members per household for Greek families. This advantage is attributed to the large population differential that exists in favor of immigrants in productive ages between 15-64 years

old. Immigrant households constitute 73.3% of the total number of households in this age group, in relation to the corresponding share of Greek households, which is at 63.7%. Children ages 14 and younger constitute 24% of the immigrant household population, while elderly persons make up only 2.5%.¹⁴

Table 2: Average individuals per household

Average individuals per household	Greeks	Migrants	Total
Members up to 14 years old	0.40	0.79	0.42
Members 15-64 years old	1.72	2.42	1.75
Members 65 years old and over	0.58	0.08	0.56
Total	2.70	3.30	2.73

Source: ESYE : Research of Domestic Budgets 2004/2005, Athens.

Elaboration of elements A.Kontis – S.Zografakis – Th.Mitrakos: The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP, p. 31.

Based on the figures in the above table, the representation of migrants in Greece's total population is higher in the productive and young population and is limited in the elderly population, where the proportion of Greeks is higher. The elderly account for 21.5% of persons in a Greek household¹⁵.

Another interesting parameter in the study on Family Budgets by the National Statistical Service is the size, quality, and property arrangements of economic migrants' households. According to the related statistics, 74.3% of immigrant households are located in apartment buildings, while the remaining 25.7% reside in detached homes. The overwhelming majority of economic migrants' residences (90.2%) are rented, while hardly 5% of immigrant residences are privately-owned and were acquired after the year 2000. Finally, 85% of economic migrants' residences were built prior to 1980, while hardly 0.9% of immigrants live in homes built within the last five-year period¹⁶.

The statistics also show that the majority of immigrant families reside in rented apartments with two (50%) and three rooms (24%), which were built prior to 1980.¹⁷

3. Migration and the Labor Market

According to statistics provided by the National Statistical Agency, there were 304,173 self-employed migrants in the labor market in 2007; 196,654 men and 107,515 women.

Migrant employment in Greece accounts for 7% of the total national employment; 8 % of the male workforce and 7% of the female workforce.

The highest percentage of employed migrants is between the ages of 20-44, accounting for 75% of the entire group. In contrast, when looking at the total national workforce, the same age group corresponds to 65% of the total working population.

From the migrants that were out of the labor market (inactive population) in 2007, roughly two-thirds were occupied with family care (women)¹⁸, the other one-fourth with schooling, and 10% were retirees. The migrants that were out of the labor market in 2007 correspond to 3% of the total inactive population in the country.

The employment of migrants in Greece is grouped mostly under paid employment (90%), and self-employed migrants make up only 6.5%. Out of the self-employed migrants, 2.8% of them are employers and 1.7% work in unsalaried positions¹⁹.

A 2007 survey conducted by the National Statistical Service of Greece (annex of tables) on the concentration of migrant workers and Greek workers across various sectors of economic activity in Greece yielded the following information. 35.4% of all migrant workers were employed in construction as opposed to 27.3% vis-à-vis the general population. Another large sector of migrant employment included hotels and restaurants, occupying 10.6% of all migrant workers, in contrast to 10.1% of migrant workers vis-à-vis the general population. Manufacturing accounted for 14.7% of total migrant employment as opposed to 8% of migrants in relation to the general workforce. 15.8% of all immigrant workers were employed in domestic services, representing 70.1% of all employees in this sector. Finally, immigrant employment in the agricultural sector (agriculture & livestock-farming) rose to 4.9% of all migrant workers, in contrast to 3% in relation to the general population.

Of course, it is obvious that this statistical analysis includes only legally employed migrants – who account for a mere 50% of the total immigrant population working in Greece.

The higher percentages of migrant employment in formal and informal labor markets indicate a higher level of migrant access – particularly for female immigrants – to the Greek labor market. At the same time, it is forecasted that this tendency will remain stable in the near future, at least for first-generation male and female immigrants²⁰.

However, it should be noted that ever since the period that Greece became a “host country” for (mostly unskilled) migrant laborers, 1% of the active Greek population in the productive ages has migrated to developed nations in the European Union and North America.

More specifically, an estimated 550,000 Greeks left to go abroad during the period 1998–2007 in order to take jobs with high professional specialization, because they cannot find work in the Greek job market due to the average level of development and the lack of technological growth.

3.1 Discrimination in the labor market

Immigration in Greece and other European Union countries beginning from the 1990's and onwards took place in a disorganized way, which contributed to the direct integration of migrants in the Greek labor market via unspecialized jobs (construction, tourism, agricultural). These were jobs that Greek workers did not want.

A high percentage of female immigrants (50%) work in domestic positions. Seven out of every ten women working in this sector are immigrants²¹.

The increase of migration to Greece from the Balkan countries – primarily Albania (Albanians constitute 57.5% of the total number of migrants in Greece) – along with the building-up of family and social networks among immigrants, contributed to the direct coverage of unskilled positions in the aforementioned sectors of economic activity.

This process did not allow immigrants to develop their knowledge and experience, not to mention the level of their wages and working conditions²².

According to relevant research²³ focusing on Albanian immigrants in Thessaloniki, 69.5% of immigrants earned lower wages than their Greek colleagues employed in the same enterprise.

In other research,²⁴ 82% of migrants answered that they work only one job, and the 75% of migrants answered that their annual income is moderate.

According to data compiled by the Social Insurances Institute (2003)²⁵, daily wages for Greeks amount to 41.20 euros, while immigrants earn only 26.07 euros per day. The divergence is lower in areas of manufacturing and technical work, where the daily wages of Greeks amount to 48.98 euros in relation to 41.09 euros for immigrants.

An actuarial study²⁶ by the Social Insurances Institute concludes that economic participation of insured immigrants in social insurance funds is disproportionate to their number for two main reasons:

- a) Due to the lower average wages that migrants receive relative to Greeks
- b) Due to the workdays that are secured in the social insurance fund (14.17 days per month for immigrants relative to 17.64 days for Greeks on average)

Consequently, amidst these conditions of discrimination in the labor market, it appears that the process of immigrant legalization will function as a basic precondition for the acquisition of wages, insurance and labor rights for migrants, and will also help combat discrimination. From this viewpoint, the legalization of migrants constitutes a challenge for the immigration policy of Greece and other European Union states.

Indeed, the three legalizations that did take place served to progressively decrease the number of informal migrants. However, this did not resolve the problem of undeclared immigration in Greece, which creates serious problems in the Greek labor market. As a result, in 2007 the Greek Parliament approved Law 3356/2007 and tried to combine three fundamental objective principles that have a direct relation to migrants' ability to gain access to the official establishment regarding residency and labor, with the help of planned actions promoting social integration for migrants in Greece²⁷.

In other words, after almost two decades of migration in Greece, the legalization of residency and labor remains a central issue of migratory policy, in addition to the acquisition of corresponding rights for thousands of informal migrants in our country.

3.1.1. *The immigrants' income*

According to statistics from the Family Research Budgets (2004/2005), the average income of migrants has increased to 1,538 euro per month, but remains 28% lower than the corresponding income for Greek households (2,134 euro per month). Three-fourths of the income from immigrant households comes from wages from their main job (5.2% of income comes from holiday and vacation pay provided in their main work permits, 6.1% comes from entrepreneurial activity, 1.6% from pensions, 1.6% from secondary or extraordinary work, and 1.5% of their income comes from benefits and compensation)²⁸.

The basic source of income for immigrant households is derived from paid employment, in contrast to Greek households, whose income breakdown is as follows: paid employment (30%), entrepreneurial activity (14%), agriculture and livestock-farming (3.3%), rents (3.3%), pensions (19.5%), dividends (0.2%) etc.²⁹

4. Migration policy in Greece

The legislative framework of migration policy in Greece since the beginning of 1990 is characterized by a tendency towards progressive legalization, such as control of entry and prohibition of illegal migration. Relevant laws include N 1975/91, N 2434/96, N 2452/96, N 2910/01, N 3386/05, and N 3536/07.

Consequently, the six legislative interventions in seventeen years prove that migration policy in Greece has not been successful in meeting its objectives. The same can be said for the central and regional government, as well as the local administration, that enforce migration policy and have proven in practice that the various levels of government do not operate at a high level of effectiveness and offer limited services for migrants³⁰.

The most important problem lies in the political decision to assign the legalization of immigrants to a bureaucratic, complicated, and demanding system,³¹ and not the inability of central, regional, and local authorities to cope with the new and contemporary duties with which they are faced.

Indeed, the obligation of fulfilling 250 workdays and maintaining insurance as a basic prerequisite for obtaining residency and a work permit, as well as the cost of the application (150-1,500 euros per individual) may appear in theory to function as a means of combating undeclared and illegal employment, but in practice these factors actually deter migrants from participating in Greece's legalization programs.

As a result, it becomes evident that the applied immigration policy in Greece is not conducive to social legalization, meaning that the integration of migrants does not in fact exist in the field of actuarial, labor, and social rights³².

Indeed, a significant number (50% of total migrants) of immigrants are employed illegally, working without social insurance and unemployment benefits, earning wages lower than those agreed upon in collective bargaining agreements, and facing difficulties in reuniting their families. Furthermore, their comprehension and desire to understand the native language and culture of their host country is lacking³³.

It thus becomes very important to clarify the necessity of the objectives of migration policy, the legalization of migrants' residency and labor status, and their integration into Greek society.

This necessity led to the modification of certain provisions in Law N.3386/2005. In February of 2007,³⁴ Law 3536/2007 was approved, and it is characterized by three central objectives:

- a) The simplification of bureaucratic processes and the facilitation of immigrant legalization.
- b) The resolution of problems that are not attributed to the behavior of immigrants (i.e., non-insured work).
- c) The facilitation of immigrants' social integration³⁵.

More specifically, in 2007 – one year after the enforcement of Law 3386/2005 – Law 3536/2007 was given an additional 21 articles that modify and supplement many articles of Law 3536/2005.

Taking into consideration the three aforementioned objectives, Law 3386/2007 specifically calls for:

- a) The creation of a national committee for the social integration of migrants.
- b) The simplification of processes for the legalization of immigrants.
- c) The abolition of the obligation to produce a written labor contract by migrants that are occupied by more than one non-permanent employer in the manufacturing, domestic service, and rural economy sectors as well.
- d) The fulfillment of the required number of days of insurance coverage (200 days in the private sector; 150 in the rural sector and 250 days for self-employed workers).
- e) A single residency and labor permit for migrants.
- f) The granting of residency for educational purposes, as well as the provision of regulations related to efforts to reunite the families of migrants.
- g) The enrollment of immigrants' children in primary and secondary-level schools.

h) The ability to purchase up to 20% of revenue stamps (days of insurance coverage) so that the required limit for the issuance or renewal of migrants' residency permits is met.

However, in regards to the existing situation in Greece, it is emphasized that the ease and effectiveness with which migrants could enter the labor market was not followed by an extensive number of legalizations and increased social integration for immigrants.

Table 3: Residence permissions at 15/10/2007

Category	Total
Indefinite Duration	5
Self – sufficient	5,884
Long Duration	1
Seasonal work	5,342
Labor A	283,332
Labor B	1,454
Labor Others	438
Labor executives	1,447
Researchers	35
Others	1,888
Family members of E.U. citizen	6,608
Family members of E.U. citizen - Wife	45,337
Family members NTC	123,790
Legalization	505
Legalization	650
Legalization	529
Studies	3,994
Studies Others	262
Total	481,501

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008

As seen by the statistics in the existing legislative framework, Greece's immigration policy is characterized by an orientation towards the direction of progressive legalization and integration of migrants into Greek society. At the same time, immigration policy in Greece provides for the promotion of regulations that would lead to the permanent presence of migrants and their families in the country, without requiring continuous legislative regulations, complex application renewals mired in bureaucracy, and revisions of residency and labor permits.

This kind of immigration policy would contribute to the evolution of Greece from a "host country" to a country that attracts an international workforce (unskilled and skilled), other with other categories of migrants (students, researchers, and executives with high administrative, technical and scientific knowledge, etc.), and includes them in the developmental needs of the country and in the improvement of its demographic prospects³⁶.

Table 4: Residence permissions at 15/10/2007 per category & age

Category	AGE								Total
	00-06	07-12	13-18	19-30	31-40	41-50	51-64	65-	
Indefinite Duration			1		1	1	2		5
Self – sufficient	3	6	1,230	4,610	16	10	8	1	5,884
Long Duration					1				1
Seasonal work				1,555	1,800	1,606	378		5,342
Labor A			55	79,955	107,631	65,073	29,323	1,227	283,332
Labor B				166	726	443	112	7	1,454
Labor Others				216	117	53	42	10	438
Labor executives				353	533	367	180	14	1,447
Researchers				11	20	3	1		35
Others	24	29	141	483	327	315	370	199	1,888
Family members of E.U. citizen	25	191	802	1,282	1,467	799	1,147	895	6,608
Family members of E.U. citizen - Wife	22	6	16	8,459	19,108	10,529	5,826	1,370	45,337
Family members NTC	29,669	26,587	21,278	18,497	15,942	8,769	2,801	246	123,790
Legalization	239	157	71	14	12	8	4		505
Legalization	17	14	14	325	186	79	13	2	650
Legalization	5	32	79	403	10				529
Studies	2	1	66	3,466	433	23	3		3,994
Studies Others			9	139	60	31	18	5	262
Total	30,050	27,048	23,762	119,934	148,390	88,109	40,228	3,976	481,501

Source : Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008

It is proven that the basic parameter that can function to equalize the integration of migrants in the labor market and Greek society is the improvement of the level and effectiveness of the immigrant legalization process,³⁷ with the help of particular procedures such as:

- i. Detachment of granting and renewal of residency contingent to the fulfillment of a particular number of insured workdays (stamps).
- ii. The realization of social and actuarial obligations of employers.
- iii. The substantial reinforcement of public supervisory authorities.³⁸

4.1 Refugees in Greece

A significant increase in migration in Greece is illustrated by the relative statistics, given that in 2004 the number of illegal migrants totaled 44,987 and in 2007 it rose to 112,364.³⁹

Table 5: Development of illegal migration in Greece

Year	Number of economic migrants
2004	44,987
2005	66,351
2006	95,239
2007	112,364
2008 (1st quarter)	19,741

Source: Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008.

However, apart from the statistical highlighting of the phenomenon of illegal migration in Greece, two issues still exist. The first refers to the material and technical infrastructure capabilities and conditions necessary for Greece to receive the increased number of migrants (immigration has quadrupled in the last 4 years) in relatively decent conditions, and the second involves the required resources and financing by the E.U. for the management of migrant arrivals in Greece.

In fact, Greece was financed by the European Union with 1.2 million euros in 2007, and in 2008 it is forecasted that it will receive 1.5 million euros. In contrast, the corresponding resources allocated to Sweden amounted to 4.8 million euros in 2007 and 11.8 million euros in 2008.⁴⁰

While Greece ranks fourth after only Sweden, France and Great Britain in the number of asylum applications received, the funding it receives from the European Fund of Refugees is low and as a result its handling of immigration suffers. The rising trend of migration is also illustrated by the increase in the number of migrants that were remanded to reception centers. This figure is up from 4,545 individuals in 1997 to 9,240 immigrants in 2007 (1,500 individuals the 1st quarter of 2008).⁴¹

Table 6: The statistical elements of asylum in Greece (1996-2007)

Year	Application Forms	Under Consideration	Rejections	Recognitions	% Recognitions	Asylum for humanitarian reasons	Total of Recognitions	% Total of Recognitions
1996	1,572	634		139	22%	-	-	-
1997	4,376	2,376	2,216	130	5.5%	94	224	9.5%
1998	12,953	3,904	3,748	156	3.9%	287	443	11.3%
1999	1,528	1,716	1,570	146	8.5%	407	553	32.2%
2000	3,083	1,970	1,748	222	11.2%	175	397	20.1%
2001	5,499	1,312	1,165	147	11.2%	148	295	22.4%
2002	5,664	9,378	9,278	36	0.39%	64	100	1.07%
2003	8,178	4,532	4,504	4	0.08%	25	29	0.62%
2004	4,469	3,847	3,744	11	0.28%	43	54	1.40%
2005	9,050	4,624	3,426	39	0.84%	49	88	1.90%
2006	12,267	10,478	10,414	64	0.61%	64	128	1.20%
2007	1,683	339	334	5	1.47%	4	9	2.65%

Source : Ministry of Public Order, Athens, December 2007.

The same upward trend is also observed in the number of asylum seekers - particularly after 2005 - because of the arrival of refugees from countries that were affected by wars.

5. Conclusion

Today, despite the deficiencies in the official statistics, economic migrants in Greece exceed one million persons and the immigration phenomenon in the country is an important area for developmental policies related to the planning and concretization of a well-rounded immigration policy focusing on the legalization and integration of migrants into Greek society.

This necessity arises from the twenty-year existence of an immigration wave in Greece, as well as from developments taking place within the actual phenomenon of immigration itself, in regards to the education, employment, income, social insurance, health care, residence, legalization and integration of migrants – issues that are at the core of public policy.

However, it could be said that the size and complexity of the immigration phenomenon requires that public policies be exercised in a comprehensive manner, and not partially or fragmented. Such policies undermine effectiveness in confronting the social, economic, and political parameters of immigration.

Moreover, the importance of the migrants' role in the population, labor force, and generally in the Greek economy is high.

It is characteristic that between 2002-2004 a reduction is seen in the average annual migration influx to Greece (3.3 migrants per 1000 residents), as compared to the period 1991-

2001 (6.2 migrants per 1000 residents). Despite this, the percentage of migrants in relation to the total population of Greece increased proportionate to the productive and young population (persons aged of 15-64 in immigrant households account for 33.3% of the population, while their peers in Greek households constitute the remaining 63.7%). In comparison, native Greeks in the same age group increased by 21.5% per Greek household.

Also, the high rate of migrant employment in the official and informal labor market proves the high level of access and stability migrants have in the Greek workforce. The high level of access and stability of migrant employment is reflected in their housing conditions. The vast majority of migrants live with their families (90.2%) in rented apartments – usually two (50%) to three (24%) rooms – in buildings that have been built prior 1980. Note that only 5% of homes are owned by migrants and have been purchased after the year 2000.

Nevertheless, migrants' easy access to the labor market has not been accompanied by the utilization of their knowledge and experience, and as a result, their wages – as well as their terms of employment and working conditions – remain subpar to those of their Greek colleagues.

This is due to the extent of illegal and undeclared work migrants in Greece perform, despite the implementation of the third program for the legalization of residency and work status.

The phenomenon of discrimination in the labor market is also evidenced in the level of average migrant income, which according to the Study on Family Budgets (2004/2005) amounts to 1,538 euros per month and is 28% lower than the corresponding income of Greek households (2,134 euros per month).

Accordingly, it is clear that discrimination of migrants in the labor market and Greek economy cannot be tackled only by achieving high levels of efficiency in immigration policy, but also by advancing the legalization of migrants' residency and employment status, and their inclusion in Greek society.

This necessity has led to amendments in the regulations of Law N.3386/05, and the passage of Law N.3536/07 in February 2007, which is characterized by three key aspects:

- a) The simplification and facilitation of bureaucratic procedures and processes for migrants' legalization.
- b) The resolution of problems that are not due to migrants' behavior (non-insured labor).
- c) The facilitation of migrants' social integration.

It is worth noting that immigration policy in Greece, as evidenced by the statistics from the existing legislative framework, is characterized by an orientation towards the direction of progressive legalization and integration of migrants into Greek society. At the same time, however, immigration policy in Greece presents limitations in promoting arrangements that could lead to a more permanent presence of migrants and their families in the country, without requiring continuous legislation, in addition to complicated residency and work permit renewals mired in red tape.

This shows that the main factor that could serve to balance the integration of migrants into the labor market and Greek society is the improvement of the level and effectiveness of the legalization process, through concrete measures such as:

- a) The detachment of the issuance and renewal of residency permits from the number of insured workdays (stamps) accrued by migrants.
- b) Mandating social insurance and reinforcing the obligations of employers.
- c) The substantial reinforcement of public oversight authorities.

At the same time, illegal migration in Greece appears to be on the rise, given that the number of economic migrants in Greece has grown from 44,987 in 2004 to 112,364 in 2007 (1,500 persons for the 1st quarter of 2008). This increase of illegal migration is also evidenced by the growing number of migrants who end up in reception centers, which is up from 4,545 individuals in 1997 to 9,240 migrants in 2007 (1,500 persons in the 1st quarter of 2008).

The same upward trend is also observed in the number of asylum applications – particularly after 2005. This is attributed chiefly to the arrival of refugees from countries that are affected by military strife. At the same time, the effort to control the quality characteristics of those persons wishing to work in the European Union is today one of the top priorities of the immigration policy of the 27 EU member-states, in order to meet the growing need for a specialized workforce.

The challenge for immigration policy, among other goals, is to create conditions to avoid the “social fragmentation” of the European migrant population. This means that all individual member-states together with the European Union should perceive migration flows not as a type of threat but as a component contributing to the cohesion of their societies, with respect to the fundamental rights of migrants.

Notes

1. IOM (International Organization of Migrants) 2007. 3% of the world's population (200 million people) are migrants and the 50% of them are female. This tendency is increasing despite border control, and the number of worldwide migrants increased from 176 million to 191 million in 2006.
2. Chr. Baganos, D. Papadopoulou, (2003), *Migratory tendencies and European migratory policy*, INE/GSEE-ADEDY, ATHENS, p. 50. During this period migrants in Greece could be classified into two categories of migrants. The first category concerns migrants from other countries that illegally entered the country, and the other concerns expatriate migrants arriving mostly from the former Soviet Republics.
3. N. Georgarakis, (2007), *The migratory policy in Greece*, EKKE, Athens, p. 8.
4. L. Labrianidis, A. Lyberaki, (2001), *The Migrants of Albania at Thessalonica*, Observer Editions, Thessalonica, p.p. 109-136.
5. A. Marvakis, D. Patsanoglou, M. Paulou, (2001), *The migrants in Greece*, Editions Greek Letters, Athens, p. 14.
6. P. Linardos-Rilmon, (2003), *The need for an new approach of migration*, books INE, no. 24, Aplil, Athens, p. 10.
7. M. Georgarakis, (2007), *The migratory policy in Greece*, EKKE, Athens, p. 13.
8. M. Georgarakis, p. 13 s.a.
9. S. Robolis, (2007), *The migration in Greece*, Report SOPEMI 2007, Paris, p. 7.
10. C. Dorival, “The immigrants also getting old”, *Revue Allertentatives Economiques*, no 236/ Avril 2005, p. 67. In France according to the population census of 1999, there were 360,000 immigrants living in the country who were older than age 65; this translates to 28% more than 1990.
11. Ap. Kapsalis: “Undeclared employment and legalization of the immigrants, Athens 2007 Presented at the circle of lectures.” INE/GSEE-ADEDY 13/05/08, p. 5. Migration to EU member states is decreasing. From 2002-2004, the average immigration influx was 1,800,000 migrants or 3.94 migrants per 1000 citizens. By 2010, it will be 1.7 migrants per 1000 citizens, - a reduction of 56%. (Eurostat 2004).

12. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007, *Undeclared employment and legalization of the immigrants*, Athens, p. 7.
13. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens, p. 30.
14. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens, p. 31.
15. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens, p. 31.
16. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens 2006, p. 32-33.
17. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens 2006, p. 34.
18. I. Psimenos, Chr. Skamnakis, (2008), *Domestic labour of migrants and Social Protection*, Papazisi Publications, Athens.
19. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos, (2006), *The economic repercussions of the employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade at the GNP*, p. 172 and p.p. 140-142.
Immigrant workers in Greece contribute anywhere between 2.3% to 2.8% of the GNP. If immigrants were to leave Greece, it is estimated that 50% of the jobs that they legally hold at present (400,000) would remain vacant, giving rise to negative pressures on the Greek economy (reduction of consumption and GNP, stagnation or limited reduction of income in the intermediate and higher social strata).
20. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007), *Undeclared employment and legalisation of immigrants in Greece*, p. 18.
21. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007), *Management guide to employment discrimination*, Athens, p. 21
22. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007), *Management guide to employment discrimination*, Athens, p. 22.
23. L. Labrianidis, A. Lyberaki, (2001), *Albanian immigrants in Thessalonica*, Observer Publications, Thessaloniki.
24. T. Kavounidou, (2002), *Research for the economic and social integration of immigrants*, Observatory of Employment, Athens.
25. L. Alibradi-Maratou and E. Gazon, (2005), *Immigration and Health-Care*, National Centre of Social Researches.
26. S. Robolis, G. Romanias, V. Margios, I. Xatzibasilloglou, (2007), *Actuarial Study IKA- ETAM, INE-GSEE-ADEDY*, Athens, p.p. 62-64.
27. D. Papadopoulou, Chr. Bagavos, A. Kapsalis, V. Kriatsioti, A. Feronas, (2007), *Evaluation Report of immigration policy in Greece*, INE-GSEE-ADEDY, Athens, p. 62.
28. A. Kontis – S. Zografakis – Th. Mitrakos: *The economic repercussions of employment of immigrants over the duration of the last decade in the GNP*, Athens University, Athens 2006, p. 35.
29. A. Kontis, S. Zografakis, Th. Mitrakos: p. 36. The high share of wages in migrant household income and the high share of pensions in Greek household income corresponds to the different age-related make-up of the two populations (the elderly constitute 21.5% of the Greek population in comparison to just 2.5% among the immigrant population).
30. P. Linardos-Rylmon, (2003), *The necessity of a new approach of migratory policy in Greece*, Athens, p. 10.
31. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007), *Immigration and social exclusion in the Greek labour market*, INE-GSEE-ADEDY, Athens, p. 48.

32. S. Georgoulas, "The legislative frame of migratory policy in Greece", See K. Kasimatis' book, *Migratory policy and the strategy of integration*.
33. S. Georgoulas: p. 110.
34. Law 3536/07, Government Gazette 212A/23-08-07.
35. Ap. Kapsalis, (2007), *Undeclared Employment and legalization of migrants*, INE-GSEE-ADEDY, Athens, p. 238.
36. Alpha Bank: *Economic Report*, Athens 2005, p.p. 26-28.
37. K. Dimoulas, D. Papadopoulou, (2007), *Social Integration forms for immigrants in the region of Attica*, INE/GSEE – ADEDY, Athens, p. 70.
38. Ap. Kapsalis: Undeclared employment and legalization of immigrants, *Proposal (13/05/08)* Lectures INE/GSEE-ADEDY.
39. Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008. It is characteristic that the 55% of illegal immigration takes place via the land borders of the country, 10% via the marine borders and 35% in the interior of the country.
40. Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008.
41. Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, Athens 2008. In 2007 land and marine authorities apprehended 2,068 illegal immigrants and 396 individuals were caught in the 1st quarter 2008.

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