



The Greek integration policy for migrants and refugees

historical context,
contemporary challenges,
future prospects

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Country Profile

Country of immigration

- Since early 1990s

Characteristics of immigrant flows in the 1990s

- Mainly from the Balkans and former Soviet Republics
- Albania: 50%+ of inflows
- irregular immigration
- regularisation programmes
- employment in informal economy
- employment in agriculture, tourism, construction, services



Country Profile

Since 2000

- new countries of origin

Total immigrant population

- over 1 mil. (regular & irregular)

Since 2008/9

- economic crisis
- de-integration of regular immigrants

Since 2015

- refugee crisis
- increase in asylum applications (since March 2016)
- approximately 70.000 displaced persons remain in Greece (Oct. 2019)



Evolution of the migrant integration policy

First decade (1990s)

Emphasis:

- a) prevent the entry & stay of immigrants
- b) restricting immigration

key actors: police and army

“sweep operations”, unofficial expulsions of undocumented immigrants

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Explanatory Report of
Law 1975/1991

“...Suddenly, Greece began to be flooded by foreigners, who by entering, staying and working illegally, create enormous social problems for the state, while they try to solve their own problems by engaging in acts of crime (drugs, robberies, thefts, etc.)”

Evolution of the migrant integration policy

first comprehensive migration law

- **three-year action plan for immigrant integration** (2002-2005)
- included measures for improving and facilitating migrants' insertion into the **labour market**, addressed issues of health care and introduced measures combating **racism** and **xenophobia**

Law
2910/2001

- *Social integration is intended to **grant rights** to third-country nationals, that ensure their **proportionally equivalent participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the country** on the one hand, and aim at **respecting the fundamental rules and values of Greek society**, on the other, so as to accomplish the targets of the integrated programme actions, (...), **while preserving their national identity**. (Article 65)*
- Introduction of a Complete Action Plan for the social integration of immigrants (ESTIA) (Article 66)

Law
3386/2005

Evolution of the migrant integration policy

Law
3838/2010

- children who were born in Greece could acquire **nationality at birth** (Under conditions)
- children of immigrants could acquire **citizenship through a simple declaration** by their parents (under conditions)
- extended to TCNs the **right to vote and stand as candidates in local elections**.
- **2013**: Council of State decision that the nationality acquisition for migrants and local voting rights for TCNs are **unconstitutional**.

Introduction of **Migrant Integration Councils**
institutional innovation intended to **promote the political and civic participation of immigrants at the local level**.

mission:

Law
3852/2010

- **inform the municipal government** about the problems that the migrants face in the respective region,
- present **proposals** for actions aimed at the **integration** of the migrants in the local government and policy-making structures,
- **assist migrants** in accessing the regional and municipal services.

Evolution of the migrant integration policy

National
Strategy
(2013)

National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals
(2012-2015)

Law
4251/2014

Immigration and Social Integration Code (ISIC)
substituted immediate nationality acquisition for 2nd generation with:
a) the promotion of long-term residence status and
b) a special permit for the second generation

Law
4332/2015

Reintroduction of nationality acquisition for the 2nd generation

- increased the required years of school attendance (from 6 years to 9 years) in Greece, for second generation immigrants to obtain Greek nationality

Evolution of the migrant integration policy

National Strategy (2019)

New model of integration

Aims to create and sustain an open society which respects diversity

Integration as a two level process

- **reception** (asylum seekers). State: Protection and basic reception facilities. Premature integration, basis for future integration
- **Integration** (migrants, recipients of international protection). State: should secure preconditions for successful insertion in host society.

Evaluation of the migrant integration policy



**MIGRANT
INTEGRATION
POLICY INDEX
2015**

 **GREECE**



2014

Rank: **27 out of 38**

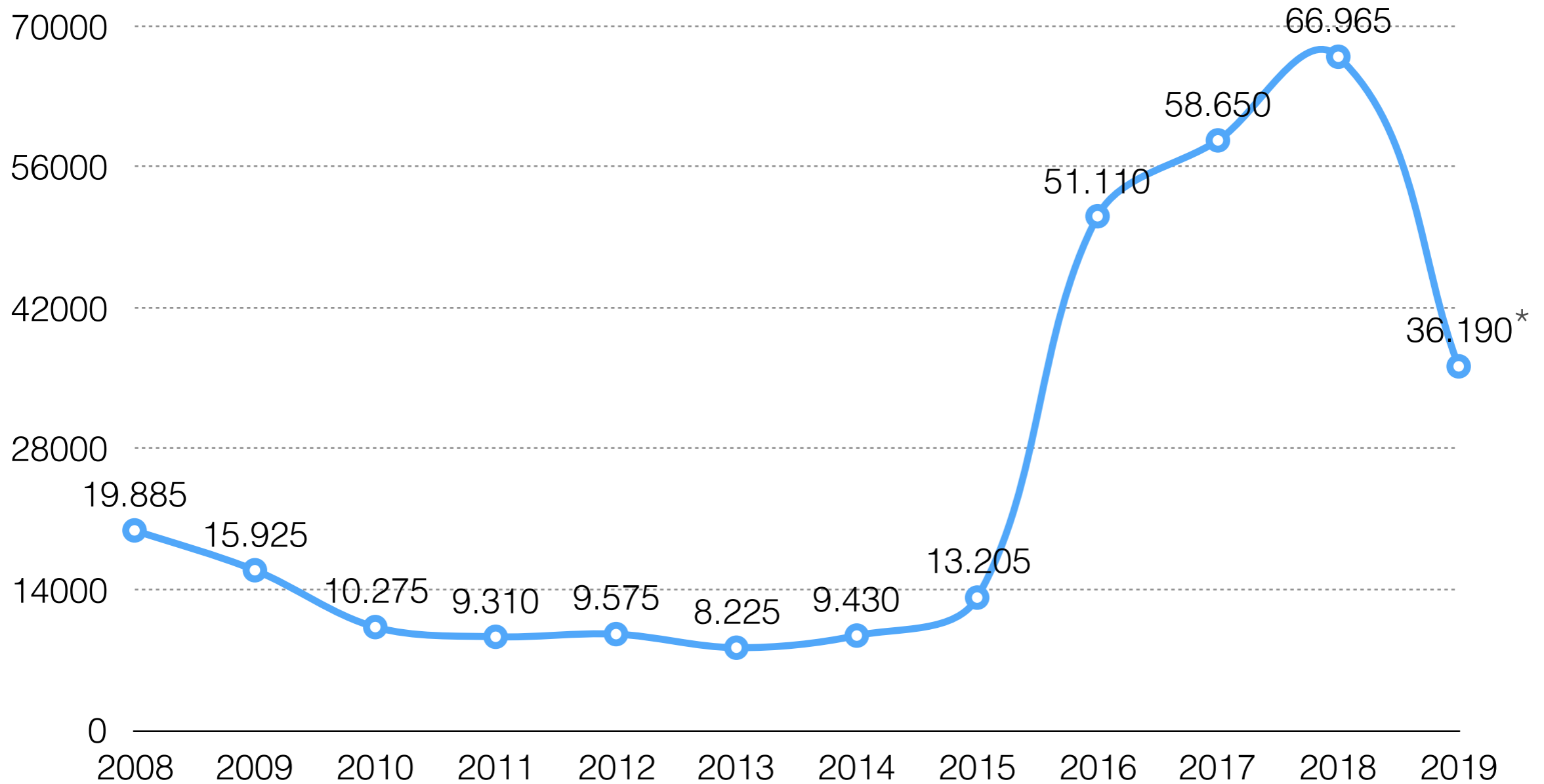
MIPEX Score: **44**

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION		60
LABOUR MARKET MOBILITY		55
FAMILY REUNION		55
PERMANENT RESIDENCE		54

EDUCATION		36
ACCESS TO NATIONALITY		34
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION		30
HEALTH		27

Refugee integration policy

Asylum and first time asylum applicants



* Data for 2019 refer to 31 July.

*Sources:
eurostat migr_asyappctza, migr_asyappctzm
(Asylum and first time asylum applicants) Last update: 18-10-2019

Refugee integration policy

theory

Labour market

Law 4375/2016: all international protection beneficiaries and applicants have **access** to wage employment or self-employment **on the same terms and conditions with Greek nationals**

Healthcare

international protection beneficiaries and applicants are **entitled to free access** to pharmaceuticals and healthcare in medical centres and hospitals

Social security and welfare services

Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) unemployment benefits, subsidised vocational training programmes and employment counselling services

Refugee integration policy

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practice

Labour market

financial crisis, high unemployment rates, bureaucratic obstacles (documents for employment, opening a bank account)

Healthcare

accessibility, lack of female medical staff, interpreters, drugs and medical examinations are not provided for free

Social security and welfare services

difficulties in issuing social security and tax registration numbers, registering in the unemployment register

Refugee integration policy

Education


Law (4415/2016): separate preparatory **reception classes (DYEP)** for refugee children in public schools

Refugee children aged between 6 and 15 years old are able to enrol in afternoon classes from 14:00 to 18:00 in nearby public schools

In 2016-2017 **2,643 refugee pupils** (out of a total 7,700) aged between 6-15 years old attended reception classes in public schools.

Obstacles:

- running in parallel with formal education options
- limited number of places in public schools,
- lack of supporting documentation,
- children's health problems,
- considerable divergences in literacy levels,
- co-existence of numerous linguistic backgrounds



issues of concern among the Greek public

Overview

immigration to Greece: neither mediated nor planned

priorities: immigration control and labour regulation

integration: secondary priority

labour-oriented approach to migration

economic conception of migration guided migration policy

immigrant integration in Southern European societies takes place mainly through labour market insertion

regularizations are legitimized as a mechanism allowing the legal inclusion of formally unwanted (irregular) immigrants, provided that they enhance the utility of immigration for the receiving country's economy and society.

Overview

integration: is **less directly mediated by explicit policies of integration** but rather by **immigrants' agency** and interaction with local network and clientelistic relations that structure the labour market

Immigrants take part in local life and networks regardless of their legal situation

labour market segmentation: migrants are incorporated in the less protected segments and often in very precarious situations

Future Challenges



effect of the
economic crisis

Future Challenges



effect of the
economic crisis

2nd generation
immigrants

Future Challenges



politicisation of
refugee integration

effect of the
economic crisis

2nd generation
immigrants

Thank you

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