



**“Equality on paper”:**  
refugee and migrant integration in Greece

MIGRATION

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### Summary

- The country is classified as providing “equality on paper” regarding the integration of refugees and migrants.
- In the previous years, the Greek state has focused on managing migration flows, leaving aside the integration of refugee and migrant population.
- Regarding labour market integration, Greece has seen important legislative developments.
- Greece is still lacking an inclusive National Plan for integration of refugees and migrants.
- The signature of the agreements with Bangladesh and Egypt aims at addressing labour shortages; yet there are no available data on how the process has been developed in 2023-2024.
- More attention has been placed on non-formal educational activities rather than formal education.
- Despite the existence of legal provisions, a number of factors prevent children from attending school regularly.
- Good practices that have been implemented in the area of integration often emerge from the collaboration between state actors, international organisations, and civil society organizations.
- A combination of social practices, policy, and administrative responses should be promoted.
- It is essential to create a “whole-of-society” approach for a more inclusive integration process of refugees and migrants.

## Introduction

For many years, the reception and management of large migration flows, along with the control of irregular movements and the reinforcement of legal pathways, have been at the forefront of the Greek policy and legislative agenda.<sup>1</sup> However, there has been a shift in focus, with the integration of refugees and migrants into host communities becoming a fundamental pillar of migration policy. Undeniably, there is a strong link between migration and integration policies, while managing the effective integration of refugees and migrants is perceived both as a priority in the state’s migration policy agenda, and within the broader public discourse and opinion.<sup>2</sup>

Over the previous years, the Greek State has introduced and carried out numerous policy initiatives aimed at promoting integration across different aspects of social, political, labour, and economic life. Aligning with the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for 2021-2027, which advocates for timely support of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in the integration process, the adopted Greek National Integration Strategy seeks to facilitate and enhance the integration procedure.

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Despite the actions undertaken in the past five years and the efforts to replace the absence of an inclusive integration plan, significant gaps and ambiguities persist, posing challenges to the comprehensive integration of refugees and migrants. Specifically, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)<sup>3</sup>, characterises the country’s approach as “equality on paper”, highlighting that while migrants in Greece enjoy basic rights, they lack equal opportunities.<sup>4</sup> The most significant obstacles emerge in the areas of education, and political participation, whereas access to the labour market was characterised as “slightly favourable”.

Therefore, the first section of this policy paper will examine one of the aspects of migrant and refugee integration, and specifically, labour integration. It will provide an overview of recent actions, highlighting both the progress made, and the persisting gaps. Moreover, the following section will explore the situation of educational opportunities and the access to Non-Formal and Formal Education in Greece. Lastly, this paper will present a set of policy recommendations aimed at improving the integration of refugees and migrants, with a focus on labour and educational integration, taking also into consideration climate change, as a factor that can affect the integration process.

Overall, the objective of this brief is twofold: on the one hand, it assesses the current state of integration policies and practices in Greece, while on the other hand, it draws policy recommendations to address gaps and barriers that hinder refugees’ and migrants’ access to education and employment opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Vassilis Papadopoulos, ‘Issues of Integration of Immigrants in Greek Society’ (Institute for Alternative Policies [ENA], 2023), <[https://enainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ENA\\_Issues-of-Integration-of-Immigrants\\_EN-1.pdf](https://enainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ENA_Issues-of-Integration-of-Immigrants_EN-1.pdf)> accessed 02 November 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Amalia Frangiskou, Georgios Kandylis *et al.*, ‘From reception to integration: migrant populations in Greece during and in the aftermath of the crisis’ (National Centre for Social Research-EKKE, 2020) 17, <[https://www.ekke.gr/publication\\_files/from-reception-to-integration-migrant-populations-in-greece-during-and-in-the-aftermath-of-the-crisis](https://www.ekke.gr/publication_files/from-reception-to-integration-migrant-populations-in-greece-during-and-in-the-aftermath-of-the-crisis)> accessed 02 November 2024.

<sup>3</sup> The measurements included in the Migrant Integration Policy Index are the most recent, referring to the period 2019-2020.

<sup>4</sup> Migrant Integration Policy Index, ‘Greece-2019’ (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2019) <<https://www.mipex.eu/greece>> accessed 01 November 2024.

## Labour Integration

*...the focus of the Greek migration policy was to manage migration flows*

A significant parameter of refugee and migrant inclusion in the host society is labour integration. Undeniably, at a first stage, reception, housing, and provision of food emerge as priority needs, where most attention was paid by the Greek authorities. However, the economic integration and the employment of refugee and migrant populations becomes a means to regain their autonomy, and rebuild their lives, while also enhancing their social inclusion.<sup>5</sup> In the previous years, the focus of the Greek migration policy was to manage migration flows with an emphasis on border security, whereas the organised reception and integration of refugees and migrants was left aside.

*...making the integration process "slightly favourable".*

Following the general elections in June 2023, a new set of priorities was introduced: promotion of social cohesion and integration of refugees and migrants, addressing the labour shortages in key sectors through organised legal migration, and enhancement of sustainable reintegration. Although the integration efforts made by the Greek state have been seen as "an equality on paper", major steps have been made at a legislative and policy level, making the integration process "slightly favourable".<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this section aims at unfolding the steps that have been made from the Greek state regarding labour integration, while also underlining persisting gaps and impasses.

Based on UNHCR figures on labour integration during the last two years,<sup>7</sup> the majority of respondents (80 per cent) were either not working or were only able to find occasional work. Of those working, 56 per cent were doing so without any type of legal contract, indicating significant levels of labour exploitation. The main three challenges that refugees and migrants face with respect to finding work in Greece are the lack of knowledge of the language, the lack of documentation, and the inability to find legal employment. Moreover, the majority of respondents highlighted that the reason for stopping their job was due to its seasonal character. The figures provided by another study,<sup>8</sup> further corroborate the aforementioned, highlighting also a significant gender-based gap in access to employment, with women being disproportionately affected compared to men. Additionally, the study revealed that while economic integration scored highest in Greece, linguistic and social integration were rated lowest, underscoring the multidimensional nature of the issue. Nationality is also an aspect determining access to the labour market, *as per* Figure 1.<sup>9</sup> Individuals from Egypt, Turkey, and Iran achieved the highest integration scores, followed by Palestinians, Iraqis, Cameroonians, Syrians, and Afghans.

Complementary, a survey conducted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2021-2022, highlighted language barriers, and the lack of proper documentation as the primary challenges to employment.<sup>10</sup> Notably, the majority of participants (35 per cent) who had a job were asylum seekers, and a 33 per cent were beneficiaries of international protection,

<sup>5</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, 'Do the Human Right Thing: Raising our voice for refugee rights' (Active Citizens Fund, 2022) < <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Seeking%20a%20new%20life%20-%20seeking%20employment.pdf> > accessed 03 November 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Migrant Integration Policy Index (n 4).

<sup>7</sup> An ongoing study commissioned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from February 2022 until November 2024- with the latest available data, provides insights and figures on the integration of refugees and migrants. See: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibmVhZmJmZktOGjki00MjFkLTliYmUtZmUzZmJlVlMzZmZmJlIiwidCI6ImU1YzZmOTgxLTY2NjQtNDZlZmM0YTBjLTY1NDNkMmFmODBiZSIsImMiOiJh9>

<sup>8</sup> Marine Casalis, Dominik Hangartner, Alexandra Hartman, Rodrigo Sanchez, 'Home for Good? Obstacles and Opportunities for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Greece' (IPL, 2023) 37, < <https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/home-good-obstacles-and-opportunities-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-greece> > accessed 03 November 2024.

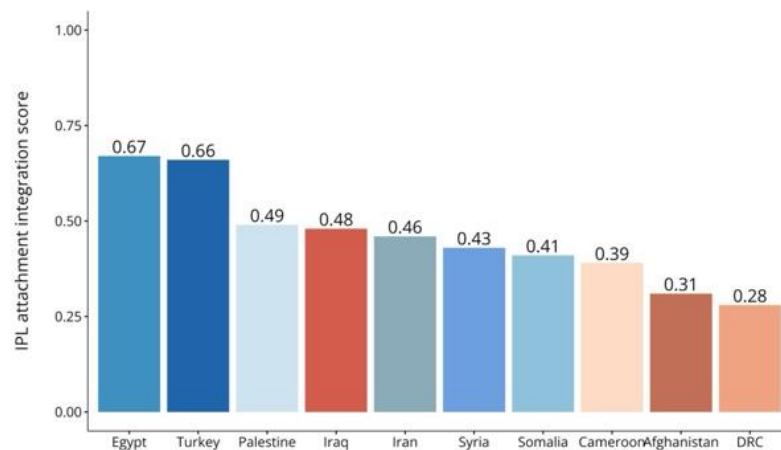
<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, (n 5).

indicating that employment opportunities often depend on an individual's legal status.<sup>11</sup> Overall, persistent obstacles, such as the temporary nature of available jobs and the difficulty in securing legal employment, significantly limit opportunities for stability and full integration.

**Figure 1, Index attachment integration score for the ten largest nationality groups<sup>12</sup>.**

Figure 56: IPL index attachment integration score for the ten largest nationality groups



Source: IPL 2023

An important legislative development was L. 5078/2023 and particularly Article 192 which amended Article 57 of the Asylum Code, providing that applicants have a right to access the labour market within sixty days of the lodging of their application and the receipt of the relevant legal documents.

An important legislative development was L. 5078/2023 and particularly Article 192 which amended Article 57 of the Asylum Code, providing that applicants have a right to access the labour market within sixty days of the lodging of their application and the receipt of the relevant legal documents. It is considered as a crucial development as prior to 2020, asylum seekers had to wait six months to gain access to employment, leading to prolonged delays and uncertainty. The amendment also streamlines processes and enhances efficiency through digitalisation. In addition, Article 193 of the same Law, introduces a new procedure for granting residence permit, which provides access to paid employment and facilitates the regularisation of a substantial number of long-term migrants in Greece. The law further extends the duration of work permits, increases the quota for seasonal workers, reduces the types of residence permits, and simplifies documentary requirements for permit renewals.<sup>13</sup> Another noteworthy addition benefits second-generation migrants, who are eligible for ten-year residence permits, compared to the previous five-year permits, granting full access to the labour market. However, this favourable provision does not extend to beneficiaries of international protection, who without a valid residence permit, remain unable to access the labour market;<sup>14</sup> a disparity that highlights a gap in the inclusiveness of the legislative framework.

Another important legislative development is the new Migration Code which came into effect in January 2020 and amended various legal provisions of the previous Migration and Social

<sup>11</sup> Additionally, it is important to mention that based on Article 26 of the Asylum Code, recognised refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries have full and automatic access to the labour market, under the same conditions as nationals, without any obligation to obtain a work permit.

<sup>12</sup> Marine Casalis (n 8) 35.

<sup>13</sup> Eda Gemi and Bledar Feta, 'Migration Developments in Greece in 2023' (ELIAMEP, 2024) 21, < <https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Working-paper-128-SOPEMI-2.pdf> > accessed 03 November 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Specifically, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection do not have the right to receive a three-year permit like recognised refugees. Instead, they obtain a one-year residence permit.

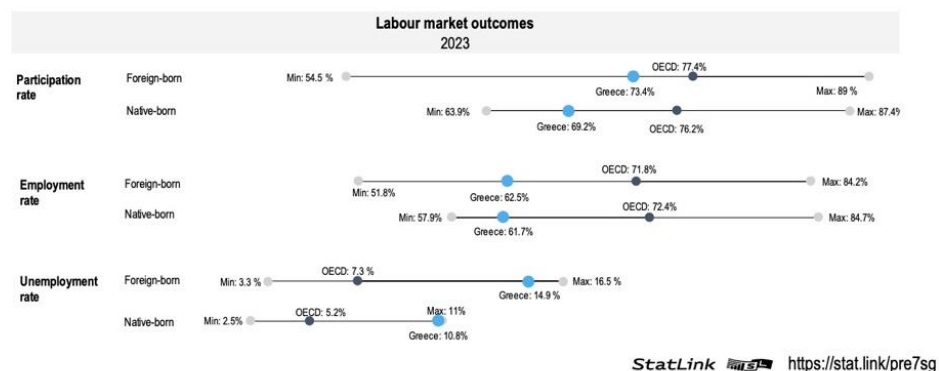


*...it is vital to highlight the general labour market conditions in Greece.*

Integration Code (L. 4251/2014).<sup>15</sup> The most important innovative provision is for the "long term residence permit" which allows a person to live and work in any country of the European Union.

As a general remark, it is vital to highlight the general labour market conditions in Greece. Despite noticeable improvements in recent years, unemployment rates in Greece remain high, compared to other EU Member States, ranking the country in the second place with 9,3 per cent of unemployment rate.<sup>16</sup> According to the International Migration Outlook,<sup>17</sup> the employment rate for migrants in Greece stands at 62,5 per cent, while the unemployment rate reaches a 14,9 per cent. These figures indicate a relative improvement in labour market conditions, with a greater reduction in unemployment among foreign-born individuals compared to native-born Greeks. Additionally, data from Eurostat's migrant integration and inclusion visualisation corroborates this trend, showing that Greek nationals maintain higher employment rates than third-country nationals.<sup>18</sup> A particularly noteworthy finding is the temporality of employment contracts, which is significantly more common among non-EU nationals (23,3 per cent) compared to Greek nationals (10,1 per cent). This data, as illustrated in Figure 2 for labour market outcomes in 2023, underscores persistent disparities in employment opportunities and contract stability between migrants and nationals.

**Figure 2, Labour Market Outcomes (2023)<sup>19</sup>**



Source: Eurostat, 2024

From the above it appears that high unemployment rates, combined with additional barriers, such as competition with Greek-speaking candidates, significantly hinder the holistic integration of refugees and migrants into the labour market.<sup>20</sup> This challenge is particularly pronounced for third-country nationals, whose unemployment rate is even higher. According

<sup>15</sup> Angeliki Dimitriadi, 'Looking for seasonal workers: Greece's search for migrant labor' (ELIAMEP, 2024), < <https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Policy-Paper-164-Dimitriadi-EN-final.pdf> > accessed 05 November 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Eurostat, 'Unemployment by sex and age' (Eurostat, 2024),

<[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/UNE\\_RT\\_M\\_custom\\_4655204/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=6870950a-b6ad-4f89-b327-2e1829d16c11](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/UNE_RT_M_custom_4655204/bookmark/table?lang=en&bookmarkId=6870950a-b6ad-4f89-b327-2e1829d16c11) > accessed 05 November 2024.

<sup>17</sup> OECD, 'International Migration Outlook 2024' (OECD, 2024) 55, [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024\\_c6f3e803.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024_c6f3e803.html) accessed 05 November 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Eurostat, 'Migrant integration and inclusion dashboard' (Eurostat, 2024) < <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/dashboard/migrant-integration-inclusion/> > accessed 06 November 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>20</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, 'Access to the Labour Market' (ECRE, 2024) < [Reception Conditions: Access to the Labour Market](https://www.greekcouncilforrefugees.org/en/reception-conditions-access-to-the-labour-market) > accessed 06 November 2024.

*...the recently amended National Integration Strategy focuses on social integration.*

to the Public Employment Service, as of December 2023, the total number of registered unemployed third-country nationals stood at 126,610, a figure that rose further in January 2024. Interestingly, while public opinion on migration remains mixed, there is a notably positive perception of the economic benefits of labour migration.<sup>21</sup> Concretely, the majority of Greek nationals (71,8 per cent) believes that the departure of many migrants has had negative repercussions on production, particularly in the sectors of tourism and agriculture. Moreover, the acceptance of migrants based on the needs of the national economy is perceived highly positively (62,7 per cent).

*...the adopted legal provisions, while addressing some past barriers to labour integration, remain largely superficial.*

In response to these challenges, the recently amended National Integration Strategy<sup>22</sup> focuses on social integration with an emphasis on early action and on the process of pre-integration for those with a refugee background. A key positive aspect of the Strategy is the inclusion of a pre-integration phase, which aims to facilitate smoother integration by teaching the Greek language, familiarising them with the European way of life, and instilling principles of democracy and human rights. Several promising initiatives have emerged, such as the "Multaka: Intercultural Tours in Athens", a pilot project which provided the opportunity to refugees and migrants to learn about Greek civilisation and history. While the Strategy focuses heavily on promoting social inclusion, it has faced criticism for its lack of a concrete implementation plan, and specific procedures to translate its objectives into effective actions.<sup>23</sup>

As underlined "the objectives and actions proposed per chapter are fragmentary in nature, while there is no deepening and analysis of tools and practices that will be used to achieve them".<sup>24</sup> The main issue, thus, lies in the fact that the adopted legal provisions, while addressing some past barriers to labour integration, remain largely superficial. As Lodovici points out, "measures to support access to the labour market are not sufficiently developed and are fragmented into projects implemented by NGOs and supported through EU funds".<sup>25</sup> In other words, access to labour market is feasible solely through the submission of an ERGANI registration certificate by their employer to the National Social Security Entity (EFKA). However, this process can deter employers who may lack the necessary knowledge or support to navigate it, while also posing administrative hurdles for refugees and migrants.<sup>26</sup>

Another criticism apropos the population mentioned in the strategy underlines that focus has been placed on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, rather than the migrant population. This by itself does not align with the preface that states "that the New National Integration Strategy is based on the new action plan of the European Union and adopts the recommendations for social inclusion". In contrast it is mentioned that "the New Integration Strategy is addressed to asylum seekers as well as recognised beneficiaries of international protection and is aligned to the legal framework in force",<sup>27</sup> which excludes to the fullest other categories of people. Thus, the idea of integration for all is not clearly envisaged in the Greek Strategy. Additionally, the progress made by state factors is also missing together with

<sup>21</sup> DiaNEOsis, 'What Greeks Believe-Part B' (DiaNEOsis, 2024) < [https://www.dianeosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/TPE2024\\_Part\\_B.pdf](https://www.dianeosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/TPE2024_Part_B.pdf) > accessed 06 November 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'National Integration Strategy' (Ministry of Migration and ASYLUM, 2022) < <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/NATIONAL-STRATEGY-FINAL.pdf> > accessed 07 November 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Greek Forum of Refugees, 'Position on the National Integration Strategy' (Greek Forum of Refugees, 2022) < <https://refugees.gr/greek-forum-of-refugees-position-on-the-national-integration-strategy/> > accessed 07 November 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Apostolis Kapsalis, 'Mobility and Employment of Refugee Populations in the Greek Region' (IOM, 2022) < [https://greece.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1086/files/documents/MOBILITY%20AND%20EMPLOYMENT\\_EN\\_online.pdf](https://greece.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1086/files/documents/MOBILITY%20AND%20EMPLOYMENT_EN_online.pdf) > accessed 07 November 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Manuela Samek Lodovici, 'Integration of Refugees in Greece, Hungary and Italy: Comparative analysis' (European Parliament, 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Apostolis Kapsalis (n 24).

<sup>27</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum (n 22) 6.

*...there have been several good practices that have been implemented in the area of integration and particularly labour integration.*

the best practices that have derived from the work of civil society organisations. At this point it is also important to underline the contribution of NGOs and international organizations in advancing the integration of refugees and migrants in Greece through the provision of employability services and vocational trainings.

A survey conducted by NGOs<sup>28</sup> revealed that individuals who participated in the research were beneficiaries of the project partner organisations, meaning they had received support from professionals prior to securing employment. Thus, this demonstrates that NGO support plays a critical role in providing refugees and migrants with access to labour market information and guidance on the necessary steps to gain employment. In any case, "successful integration of refugees needs a whole-of-society approach".<sup>29</sup> There is also a notable absence of concrete measures addressing the needs of people with disabilities, as well as LGBTQ+ individuals.<sup>30</sup> Incontestably, significant progress has been achieved in improving employment opportunities for refugee and migrant populations; nevertheless, Greece still ranks among the lowest in Europe in terms of establishing an effective policy framework to enhance employability.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, there have been several good practices that have been implemented in the area of integration and particularly labour integration, and often emerge from the collaboration between state actors, international organisations, and civil society organizations. The Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection programme (HELIOS), which was launched in 2019 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) offered a variety of support actions aimed at promoting the independent living of beneficiaries of international protection, including information sessions, work counselling, language courses, and housing. A notable example is the organization of Job Fairs, which facilitate connections between employers from various sectors and refugees or migrants seeking employment. For instance, in July 2024, a Job Fair held on the island of Lesbos saw the participation of 452 individuals, resulting in 219 job offers.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, UNHCR has launched the ADAMA online platform, which plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between refugees looking for jobs in Greece and prospective employers across the country. This initiative not only provides refugees with essential information about the labour market and connects them with employers but also encourages businesses and agencies in the private sector to actively include refugees in their workforce, thereby fostering greater inclusion and diversity in the Greek labour market.

Another important initiative is the introduction of a pilot tool by the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED)- the so-called "Skills Recognition Tool".<sup>33</sup> Specifically, as the report underlined, one key insight from this initiative is the critical role of collaboration between public institutions and civil society organisations in ensuring the effectiveness of the process.<sup>34</sup> This programme is therefore, aiming at placing approximately 1,000 recognised

<sup>28</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, (n 5).

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR, 'Advancing Refugee Integration in Greece' (UNHCR, 2023).

<sup>30</sup> Generation 2.0, 'Comments on the National Integration Strategy' (Generation 2.0, 2022), <<https://g2red.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/sxolia-g2red-gia-ethiniki-stratigiki.pdf>> accessed 07 November 2024.

<sup>31</sup> The assessed indicators are the following: a) Access to employment for groups of special concern, b) Administrative barriers to accessing employment, c) Awareness raising about the specific labor market situation of beneficiaries of international protection, d) Assessment of skills, e) Job-seeking counselling and positive action, f) Targeted support for entrepreneurs. (Ibid n 24).

<sup>32</sup> EUAA, 'Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union' (EUAA, 2024) 143, <[https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-06/2024\\_Asylum\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-06/2024_Asylum_Report_EN.pdf)> accessed 08 November 2024.

<sup>33</sup> World Bank Group's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, 'Support to the Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Greece: Assessing Skills and Work Readiness-Best Practices and Recommendations' (World Bank Group, 2020), <<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099816003082261107/pdf/P17097904da52c05308137080d97c1ffb23.pdf>> accessed 08 November 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 30.



refugees in Attica and Central Macedonia. Such partnerships are essential for accurately evaluating refugees' competencies and aligning them with appropriate employment opportunities. However, as of now, there is a lack of publicly available data detailing the progress and outcomes of this pilot program, making it challenging to assess its overall impact.

*According to the Hellenic Ministry of Labour, the total number of residence visa quotas for 2023-2024 was 167,925.*

Furthermore, another factor that has contributed to shaping labour integration, is labour shortages. Concretely, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, the agricultural, tourism, and construction sectors faced increased shortages, which were addressed by granting exceptional right to work.<sup>35</sup> Yet, labour shortages remain a constant issue up to date, while efforts have been made since the beginning of the year through bilateral agreements with Bangladesh and Egypt. Before examining the aforementioned agreements, it is crucial to mention the system of metaklisi, which focuses on hiring third-country nationals for the purpose of employment- mainly to areas where there was no interest from Greek employees.<sup>36</sup> According to the latest available data (2022-2023) from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum regarding the system of metaklisi,<sup>37</sup> a total of 32,794 of requests were submitted in 2022, out of which 29,130 were accepted. In 2023, the number of requests decreased to 25,945 of which, 20,042 were approved. Nonetheless, this process has been criticised for often allowing informal hirings, without a contract, leading to exploitation.

According to the Hellenic Ministry of Labour, the total number of residence visa quotas for 2023-2024 was 167,925.<sup>38</sup> Of the available posts, 20,000 would be covered through the agreements with Egypt and Bangladesh, and the rest through the system of metaklisi. It is interesting to highlight two points at this stage. Firstly, the number of permitted work permits was set significantly lower than the requests submitted through the Regional Authorities- that were approximately 380,000. While there was an increase in the number of workers allowed in sectors such as hospitality and accommodation- 9,261 compared to 2,811 during 2021-2022- this figure remains far below the 80, 316 employees proposed. Specifically, of the 379,165 requests received for 2023-2024, only 147,925 permits were issued, covering just 39 per cent of the demand.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, limited quotas were allocated for highly skilled workers, reflecting also the relatively low demand within the Greek labour market.<sup>40</sup>

In February 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on migration and mobility was signed with Bangladesh, covering seasonal labour needs. Specifically, the agreement outlines the conditions for entry and temporary residence of Bangladeshi nationals for temporary employment. It provides the issuance of 4,000 temporary residence permits annually, each valid for a duration of five years, under the system of metaklisi.<sup>41</sup> In addition, and for the purpose of covering existing labour shortages, the Memorandum allows for up to 15,000

<sup>35</sup> Article 16 of Law No. 4783/2021 (previously Article 42 of the Legislative Act 1-5-2020) sought to address seasonal needs.

<sup>36</sup> Angeliki Dimitriadi (n 15).

<sup>37</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'Metaklisi 2022-2023' (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2023) < [https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/%CE%A3%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC-%CE%9C%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CE%BD-2022\\_2023.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/%CE%A3%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC-%CE%9C%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CF%89%CE%BD-2022_2023.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) > accessed 10 November 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 'Government Gazette Issue' (Ministry of Labour, 2023), < [https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FEK-2023-Tefxos-B-06844-downloaded-20\\_12\\_2023.pdf](https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FEK-2023-Tefxos-B-06844-downloaded-20_12_2023.pdf) > accessed 10 November 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 'Press Release on metaklisi for 2023-2024' (Ministry of Labour, 2023), < <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/sto-epipedo-tis-proigoumenis-dietias-oi-metakliseis-ergazomenon-apo-trites-chores-gia-tin-periodo-2023-2024/> > accessed 10 November 2024.

<sup>40</sup> Based on the latest data from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (September 2024), only 15 residence permits for highly skilled workers (EU Blue Card) were recorded. See more in: <https://shorturl.at/GsDAZ> (table 5, page 6).

<sup>41</sup> Angeliki Dimitriadi (n 15).

Bangladeshis already residing undocumented in Greece to be granted temporary long term seasonal visas, enabling them to enter the labour market.

According to the information provided by the Greek authorities, a total of 10,337 Bangladeshis applied for regularisation in 2023, out of whom 3,405 were granted residence permits or legal status. However, 1,009 applications were cancelled for various reasons. As of February 2024, an additional 113 applications were submitted, with approximately 5,910 still pending review. According to the Embassy of Bangladesh, rejected applicants will have the opportunity to re-apply, provided they meet the necessary conditions.<sup>42</sup>

*...on the framework of adopting a more inclusive National Integration Strategy, factors such as climate change should also be taken into consideration.*

On the other hand, the agreement with Egypt was signed on November 2022 and concerned the entry and residence of 5,000 Egyptian citizens for the purpose of employment in the agricultural sector. The screening and the choice of Egyptian nationals will be made by the state of Egypt, and then forwarded to the Greek consular authorities. The permit cap is set at a level which can be regarded as insufficient to meet the actual needs of the Greek agricultural sector. However, according to the former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, the low cap is intended to allow Greece to assess the agreement's practical implementation, while ensuring that the country does not become overly dependent on a single source for its labour needs.<sup>43</sup>

The former Minister for Migration and Asylum, announced in June 2024 that an initial list of eligible 2,400 Egyptian seasonal workers had already been compiled.<sup>44</sup> However, specific statistics on the number of Egyptian workers who have arrived in Greece under this MoU is limited and not publicly available.<sup>45</sup> Based on data from ECRE,<sup>46</sup> the recognition rates for international protection among Egyptian applicants in Greece were notably low in recent years. In 2023, the recognition rate stood at 0,9 per cent, which further declined to 0,6 per cent in 2024.

In addition, and on the framework of adopting a more inclusive National Integration Strategy, factors such as climate change should also be taken into consideration since they can critically affect the integration of refugees and migrants into the labour market, and should thus, be included in the Integration Strategy. Specifically, climate change can influence labour integration, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and tourism.<sup>47</sup> Adverse effects like rainfall variability, soil erosion, and extreme weather events may disrupt agricultural production and reduce job opportunities.<sup>48</sup> Contrariwise, a more positive outcome would be the extension of the growing season which will benefit the cultivation of certain crops, leading to the emergence of new opportunities in some areas. Therefore, the link between climate change and labour integration is an aspect that could be incorporated into the Integration Strategy, as it could foster the development of regional responses that proactively address potential impacts of climate change on the integration process. This

<sup>42</sup> InfoMigrants, 'About 3,400 Bangladeshi migrants regularized in Greece in 2023' (InfoMigrants, 2024) < <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/55362/about-3400-bangladeshi-migrants-regularized-in-greece-in-2023> > accessed 10 November 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Hellenic Parliament, 'Minutes session IV, Standing Committee on National Defense and Foreign Affairs Proceedings, article 40 para. 1' (Hellenic Parliament).

<sup>44</sup> Angeliki Dimitriadi (n 15) 17.

<sup>45</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'Press Release on the agreement between Greece and Egypt' (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2024) < <https://migration.gov.gr/stis-10-ioynioy-xekina-ti-leitoyrgia-tis-i-ilektroniki-platorma-gia-tin-efarmogi-tis-symfonias-elladas-aigyptoy/> > accessed 10 November 2024.

<sup>46</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, 'Statistics' (ECRE, 2024) < [https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/statistics/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/statistics/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) > accessed 11 November 2024.

<sup>47</sup> Stavros Kalogiannidis, Dimitrios Kalfas *et al.*, 'Integration of Climate Change Strategies into Policy and Planning for Regional Development: A Case Study of Greece (Land, 2024) < <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/13/3/268> > accessed 14 November 2024.

<sup>48</sup> Thodoris Georgakopoulos, 'The Consequences of Climate Change in Greece' (DiaNEOsis, 2021) < <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2021/12/the-consequences-of-climate-change-in-greece/> > accessed 15 November 2024.

*...despite the strengthening of the institutional and legal framework for migrant integration, the implementation phase remains incomplete and "under construction".*

raises the question of whether existing bilateral agreements could be adapted to anticipate the challenges posed by climate change. An example could be the temporal circular labour migration scheme for communities vulnerable to climate change;<sup>49</sup> Bangladesh for instance, is a country that is severely affected by climate change. Thus, in the already signed MoU the aspect of climate change could also be added, reinforcing economic growth, social welfare, and innovation. Such an initiative would provide opportunities for both countries, reduce pressures on vulnerable communities, and expand avenues for sustainable labor integration.

Overall, from the above it becomes evident that despite the strengthening of the institutional and legal framework for migrant integration, the implementation phase remains incomplete and "under construction". The primary issue thus, is not the absence of law, but rather the "inability of the administration to enforce it".<sup>50</sup> The aforementioned analysis highlights that the question of integration of refugees and migrants into today's Greek labour market remains largely unchanged over the past decade.<sup>51</sup> Undeniably, there have been notable advancements in employment through the adoption of the Law 5078/2023, the new Migration Code, the signature of the bilateral agreements with Egypt and Bangladesh, the National Integration Strategy, and the collaboration of civil society and international organisations; yet these efforts lack the coherence needed to achieve meaningful outcomes. A cohesive and comprehensive approach is still required, aligning with the needs of the national labour market, as well as emerging factors, such as climate change that could influence labour market needs, ensuring equal opportunities, and focusing on fostering long-term employment.

## Non-formal and formal education

*Educational attainment and language proficiency are widely recognised as the cornerstones of the integration process.*

Access to education is transformative for refugees and migrants, serving as one of the most critical components of successful integration. Educational attainment and language proficiency are widely recognised as the cornerstones of the integration process, enabling individuals to build independence, enhance employment prospects, and foster social inclusion.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, this section explores the current state of educational opportunities for refugees and migrants in Greece, emphasising persistent challenges and barriers that hinder access and participation. It also highlights existing best practices that have proven effective and should be expanded to ensure a more inclusive and equitable educational framework for these populations.

In contrast with the access to labour market, education for refugees and migrants in Greece is rated as "slightly unfavourable", according to MIPEX. Based on a report from the Greek Council of Refugees, educational access is described as "another hurdle-filled area".<sup>53</sup> Beyond legal stipulations, it is often the case that administrative challenges, and the absence of inclusive school practices frequently lead to exclusion. Even from a legal standpoint, the education of refugee and migrant children is often framed as an obligation, rather than a

<sup>49</sup> IOM, 'Integrating Migration into Environment and Climate Change Interventions: A Toolkit' (IOM, 2021) 4, <<https://eca.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/mmicd/environment-climate-change-toolkit.pdf>> accessed 15 November 2024.

<sup>50</sup> Amalia Frangiskou, Georgios Kandyliis *et al.* (n 2) 118.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Wolffhardt, Carmine Conte and Sinem Yilmaz, 'The European Benchmark for Refugee Integration: A comparative analysis of the National Internation Evaluation Mechanism in 14 EU Countries' (Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2022) 17, <<https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/The-European-benchmark-for-refugee-integration.-Evaluation-2-Comprehensive-report.pdf>> accessed 11 November 2024.

<sup>52</sup> UNHCR, 'The talent behind the numbers: Introducing Refugees in Greece' (UNHCR, 2022) <<https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/unhcr-greece-introducing-people-behind-numbers-updated-june-2022-enei>> accessed 11 November 2024.

<sup>53</sup> Agapi Chouzouraki, 'Without papers, there is no life: Legal barriers in access to protection for unaccompanied children in Greece' (Greek Council for Refugees and Save the Children, 2023) <[https://gcr.gr/wp-content/uploads/No\\_paper\\_no\\_life.pdf](https://gcr.gr/wp-content/uploads/No_paper_no_life.pdf)> accessed 11 November 2024.

right.<sup>54</sup> Under Article 55 of the Asylum Code, asylum-seeking children are required to attend primary and secondary school, on the same basis as Greek nationals.<sup>55</sup> Preparation for entering formal education is also of utmost importance; nevertheless, reception classes, which are essential for easing this transitions, are often delayed due to understaffing and logistical challenges, leaving many children excluded from the educational system.

*In contrast with the access to labour market, education for refugees and migrants in Greece is rated as "slightly unfavourable".*

Based on data provided by Eurostat, "educational attainment is becoming an increasingly important factor, both in the labour market and for individuals, as well as society in general".<sup>56</sup> Regarding educational attainment distributions in 2023, 41,8 per cent of third-country nationals had less than primary and lower secondary education, 41,8 per cent had upper secondary, and 10,1 per cent tertiary education.<sup>57</sup> Regarding children's education, there is a lack of official data on enrollment in formal education provided by the Ministry of Education. Available information often pertains to non-formal activities, typically provided by NGOs. However, the Ministry of Education reported an increase in school registrations (16,417 students) and attendance (12,285 students) for 2021-2022.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, regarding the applications for recognition of titles and qualifications awarded by non-Greek Higher Education Institutions, 9,224 and 8,517 applications were submitted to DOATAP in 2022 and 2023 respectively. From those, a total of 11,472 and 8,481 diploma recognition documents were issued for 2022 and 2023.<sup>59</sup>

The programme<sup>60</sup> "All Children in Education" (ACE)<sup>61</sup> implemented by UNICEF from September 2021 to February 2024, assisted a total of 24,057 children not only through the provision of preparatory classes, but also through helping with the enrolment in formal education. By August 2022, approximately 22,000 refugee and migrant children were in Greece, with an estimated 17,000 being of school age, while at the end of 2022, 16,109 of these children had accessed education: 14,844 in formal education and 1,265 in non-formal education. Thus, about 68 per cent of refugee and migrant children attended formal or non-formal education.<sup>62</sup> By the end of 2023, approximately 15,134 refugee and migrant children were enrolled in Greek schools,<sup>63</sup> and by January 2024, 14,222 were actively attending classes.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, this demonstrates a clear increase in enrollment rates, with more refugee and migrant children actively participating in education. This progress underscores the impact of targeted programmes like ACE in promoting access to education.

It is important to note that the aforementioned data are provided by UNICEF and other organisations, since the availability and regency of official, and publicly available data is

<sup>54</sup> IPA (L. 4636/2019).

<sup>55</sup> Greek Council for Refugees, 'Access to Education; (ECRE, 2024) < <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education/>> accessed 11 November 2024.

<sup>56</sup> Eurostat, 'Migrant integration statistics-education' (Eurostat, 2024) < [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant\\_integration\\_statistics\\_-\\_education](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_education)> accessed 12 November 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Eurostat, 'Population by educational attainment level, sex, age and citizenship' (Eurostat, 2024)

< [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat\\_ifs\\_9911/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifs_9911/default/table?lang=en)> accessed 12 November 2024.

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 'Refugees and Education' (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2024) < <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/tothema-prosfigiko-m>> accessed 12 November 2024.

<sup>59</sup> DOATAP, 'Statistical Data' (DOATAP, 2023) < <https://www.doatap.gr/enhmerosh/statistika/>> accessed 13 November 2024.

<sup>60</sup> It is important to mention that the ACE programme provided both formal and non-formal education opportunities for refugee and migrant children in Greece and was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and implemented in collaboration with various partners, and mainly Greek NGOs.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF, 'All Children in Education: Ensuring a Pathway to Education for Refugee and Migrant Children in Greece' (UNICEF, 2024) < <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/media/4306/file/%CE%91CE%20Brief%20ENGL.pdf>> accessed 12 November 2024.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF, 'Country Office Annual Report 2022: Greece' (UNICEF, 2022) < [https://www.unicef.org/media/135936/file/Greece-2022-COAR.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unicef.org/media/135936/file/Greece-2022-COAR.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)> accessed 13 November 2024.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF, 'Country Office Annual Report 2023: Greece' (UNICEF, 2023) < [https://www.unicef.org/media/152026/file/Greece-2023-COAR.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unicef.org/media/152026/file/Greece-2023-COAR.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)> accessed 13 November 2024.

<sup>64</sup> Greek Council for Refugees (n 55).

*...understanding and learning the Greek language remains the most significant challenge for refugees and migrants.*

limited. Notably, Greece ranks second to last among European countries in child related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) data availability, reaching only a 52 per cent.<sup>65</sup> This significant data impasse poses challenges in accurately assessing and addressing the educational needs of refugee and migrant children, underscoring the necessity for enhanced data collection and transparency to inform effective policymaking.

Adult refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to access several educational programmes offered by state and private agencies, international organisations or NGOs. For example, individuals who have not completed mandatory education can enroll in schools of Second Chance. Also, asylum seekers with a secondary education diploma are eligible to participate in examinations to enter Universities or Higher Technological Institutions or to register in Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK). On the other hand, beneficiaries of international protection are treated in the same way as Greek citizens regarding recognition of foreign certificates and qualifications. In case where documentation is unavailable, Greek authorities are required to facilitate the process. However, there is no official data available on the number of adult refugees and migrants attending formal education.

As highlighted earlier, understanding and learning the Greek language remains the most significant challenge for refugees and migrants. The limited availability of state-provided, language courses is often covered by local NGOs in collaboration with international organisations. Notable examples include the HELIOS project which integrates language learning as a component of its broader integration efforts. The Stepping Stone project implemented by a Greek NGO with the support of UNHCR, offering Greek language courses to facilitate communication and integration.

#### **Good practices:**

Several good practices are worth mentioning in the context of reinforcing educational integration of refugees and migrants. For instance, Action Two of the National Integration Strategy provides non-formal educational activities, conducted by professionals specialised in teaching Greek as a foreign language. This aspect is either taking place in preparatory classes or as an additional support within the formal educational system, including instruction in basic concepts of the English language. Nonetheless, what remains unclear is which entities will provide the language courses, how people can access them, and other general information. Additionally, the Department of Socio-economic Integration of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in collaboration with UNHCR, established a helpdesk for social integration.<sup>66</sup> This helpdesk, among other services, will also respond to requests on the access to Greek language courses and help people- through a new guide accessible in various languages- to take their first steps in the host country.

The Lifelong Learning Centers (LLC)<sup>67</sup> provided by the Ministry of Education and Religion are also another good practice that provides informal education to adults. In the context of a general education curriculum, the Centers offer Greek language courses to adults. This practice is of extreme importance for the promotion of education for adults with a refugee or migrant background and sets a great basis for the promotion of integration and social inclusion. It is also vital to mention that the Social Service through its collaboration with

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF (n 61).

<sup>66</sup> The Greek Ombudsman, 'The Challenges of Migratory Flows and Refugee Protection: Refugee Conditions and Procedures' (The Greek Ombudsman, 2024) <[https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/greece-help-desk-integration-refugees\\_en](https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/greece-help-desk-integration-refugees_en)> accessed 13 November 2024.

<sup>67</sup> See more at: [The Lifelong Learning Centers \(LLC- KABM\)](#)



schools and educational authorities facilitates the enrollment of children in schools, even without any official documentation.<sup>68</sup>

### Challenges:

From the above, it becomes obvious that a number of initiatives have been undertaken in the last years in order to facilitate the integration of refugees and migrants- both minors and adults- in the educational system of Greece; however, emphasis has been given to preparatory classes and non-formal educational activities rather than to the enrollment and active participation in formal education. These efforts, while promising, highlight gaps in coordination and communication that need to be addressed. Clarifying responsibilities, expanding the availability of language courses, and improving data collection on educational participation are some impasses that require amelioration.

*...more attention has been paid in the preparatory process and the non-formal education activities rather than the inclusion to formal classrooms.*

One problem identified during the Greek Ombudsman's on-site inspections,<sup>69</sup> is that despite the existence of legal provisions that make education mandatory, there is a number of factors that prevent children from attending school regularly. One key challenge is transportation, as many children leave in remote areas or camps which are far from schools, making regular attendance difficult. Another issue is the inadequacy of resources- such as trained personnel- which usually complicates the inclusion of refugee and migrant children to a formal classroom.<sup>70</sup>

Shortcomings were also identified in some facilities regarding available logistical infrastructure, while the lack of funding from the Ministry of Education was also an important obstacle. These obstacles often lead to higher dropout rates and limited participation in education for refugee and migrant children. Notably, many of these issues were already identified and documented by the Greek Ombudsman as early as 2021, yet they remain largely unresolved. Addressing these systemic challenges is essential to ensuring meaningful access to education for all children.

From the above examination, it becomes obvious that despite the existence of a legal framework that reassures the access to educational activities for refugees and migrants, either minors or adults, in practice, a harmonised approach with common standards and indicators for education quality and content is missing. Specifically, more attention has been paid in the preparatory process and the non-formal education activities rather than the inclusion to formal classrooms. In no case does this undermine the importance of introductory classes that will enable the smoother integration to the Greek educational system. However, more attention needs to be paid from state actors to adopting a unified approach regarding formal education. Additionally, the lack of publicly available data is also hindering the monitoring of the achieved results.

If we take the example of data offered by a Greek NGO for 2024, from the 1,920 new students that attended non-formal educational activities, only 754 attended formal education. This proves that the gap between non-formal and formal activities is wide, leading to an insufficient educational integration. The persistent impasses and difficulties in accessing formal education led to the conclusion that **stronger collaboration between state actors, NGOs, facilities, and international organisations is required** in order to provide an organised programme of educational activities for children and adults.

<sup>68</sup> Greek Forum for Refugees, 'Activity Report 2023' (Greek Forum for Refugees, 2023) 19, < [https://gcr.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/PROSFYGES\\_pepragmena\\_2023\\_GR.pdf](https://gcr.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/PROSFYGES_pepragmena_2023_GR.pdf) > accessed 14 November 2024.

<sup>69</sup> The Greek Ombudsman, (n 66) 92.

<sup>70</sup> Here it is important to add that the ACE programme, among other components, also prepared educators for diverse classrooms and helped them integrate refugee and migrant children.

## Policy recommendations

*...the integration process of refugees and migrants is still facing substantial gaps that hinder the creation of an equitable and inclusive society.*

The aforementioned analysis highlights that Greece has made notable progress in advancing the integration of refugees and migrants, with significant steps, such as the adoption of new legislation to reinforce labour integration, the release of the New Integration Strategy, and the implementation of various educational activities by organisations, public actors, and NGOs. Nevertheless, the ad hoc nature of these policies, and the inconsistencies in strategic planning continue to pose challenges. "The contradictions [of the implemented policies] cause serious impasses, and inefficiencies, which public services and agencies, the local authorities, and NGOs involved are called upon to address".<sup>71</sup> To achieve effective and sustainable integration, it is imperative to develop a stable and coherent integration policy that addresses the evolving realities of refugee and migrant populations in Greece, including emerging challenges such as climate change.<sup>72</sup>

Overall, the integration process of refugees and migrants is still facing substantial gaps that hinder the creation of an equitable and inclusive society. Addressing these challenges requires a commitment to the principles of inclusivity, equity, and adaptability. By embracing a more comprehensive approach and fostering collaboration across all sectors of society, Greece can transform integration from a mere policy goal into concrete outcomes.

1. **Adopt a holistic and coherent policy framework** that will address the needs and challenges that the refugee and migrant population is facing based on the principle of equal opportunities. While the Greek state has made strides in implementing a more structured legal and policy framework, many actions remain isolated efforts rather than part of a comprehensive strategy. Greece needs to prioritise systematic planning and coordinated efforts across all sectors.
2. **Simplify administrative processes** and make them more accessible. For example, the Greek Asylum Service's upgraded information system (Alkyoni II), developed by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, offers a promising solution by enabling services such as document submission and application registration in multilingual and digital formats, streamlining previously cumbersome processes.
3. Implement a more **comprehensive National Integration Strategy** that applies to all legally residing third-country nationals and individuals with a migrant background. Though the new National Integration Strategy provides a pre-integration process, it fails to fully incorporate labour integration into its framework. A more cohesive and inclusive approach will not only reduce inequalities but also foster social cohesion and economic development.
4. Shift focus from temporary employment to long-term labour opportunities that align with the evolving needs of the market. Additionally, a **needs assessment** would also be essential for the evaluation of labour demands, identification of the required skills, and a determination of the duration of work and stay.<sup>73</sup>
5. Incorporate **climate change and adaptation** in the integration strategy. Labour migration could be perceived as an adaptation strategy to the effects of climate change. In general, migration can be seen as an adaptation strategy regarding mobility due to climate change. Therefore, this could also be implemented in the

<sup>71</sup> Amalia Frangiskou, Georgios Kandylis *et al.* (n 2).

<sup>72</sup> By new realities it is meant the consequences of climate change and how it will affect the labour integration of refugees and migrants into the Greek society.

<sup>73</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'Press Release' (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2024) < <https://migration.gov.gr/megali-proseleyysi-ton-epi-makron-diamenonton-metanaston-sti-nomimi-apascholisi-symfona-me-to-arthro-193-tis-tropologias-toy-ypovrgeioy-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy/> > accessed 14 November 2024.

case of labour integration through bilateral skills partnerships, or circular/seasonal migration schemes. Such initiatives would provide opportunities for both countries, reduce pressures on vulnerable communities, and expand avenues for sustainable labor integration.

6. Enhance **collaboration** among state agencies, local authorities, the private sector, NGOs, international organizations, and professional associations. Such partnerships can provide targeted support and facilitate the effective integration of refugees and migrants.
7. Reinforce access to formal education., programmes like ACE must be further reinforced, as it has successfully provided both formal and non-formal educational opportunities to children, while also preparing teachers to handle diverse classrooms, resulting in a more harmonised approach to education. Scaling up such programmes and addressing systemic barriers like transportation and teacher training will be crucial for improving access to education for refugee and migrant populations in Greece.
8. Develop **individualised and needs-based approach policies** focusing on the needs of refugees and migrants. Training in intercultural education and cultural diversity, academic guidance, and financial support are some targeted needs that could be further explored at a national level, taking into consideration the needs and capacities of the country.

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