

The challenges of the 2030 Agenda

Migration as a basic element of sustainable development

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REPORT





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MIGRATION AS A BASIC ELEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. THE CHALLENGES OF THE 2030 AGENDA

This report focuses on the relation between sustainable development and migration, in an attempt to present the steps Greece has taken regarding the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda. In the first part, there is a short review of the established situation in the country after the arrival of refugees and migrants in recent years in regard to the SDGs. The second part presents the main actions of the central government with the aim to integrating both refugees and migrants, and explores the ways integration connects to SDGs. Finally, there is a general assessment of the results achieved so far in our country in terms of the advancement of the goal **“no one should be left behind”**.

A. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, MIGRATION AND THE SITUATION IN GREECE

A.1. Greece adopts the Sustainable Development Goals

The challenges arising for communities are continuously transgressing the national frontiers triggering the need to adopt a global viewpoint. With this in mind, 192 UN country-members adopted the Millennium Development Goals back in 2001, eight international development goals in order to eradicate extreme poverty, promote education, gender equality and the preservation of the environment among others. The Millennium Development Goals evolved in 2015 through many achievements in the field of inequalities mainly on a statistical level. Nevertheless, despite the ambitions expressed in the beginning of the millennium, the statistically fewer inequalities failed to be interpreted as substantial improvement in the living conditions of the people, rendering an update of the viewpoints of those goals and their adaptation to modern changes necessary.

Getting on to the next level with the main slogan **“no one should be left behind”**, the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), as determined in 2015 by the UN General Assembly, comprise the Millennium Goals. They are expected to be fulfilled by 2030 as part of the UN 70/1 resolution of the 2030 Agenda.

Sustainable development is perceived as the result of three components: a) financial growth, b) social continuity and c) environmental protection. There are overlapping elements among the three components. Two more elements are added in order to achieve their composition: collaboration and peace. According to the UN, “collaboration means to enhance the abilities of all parties so that we can all work together”, while peace, justice and powerful institutions are basic elements to improve the three main domains.

The range of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals cover 5 large units: i) human needs (poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality), ii) planet Earth (water, sustainability, climate, seas, biodiversity), iii) prosperity (energy, economy, infrastructure, inequality, cities), iv) peace (security) and v) collaboration (the means to implement sustainable development policies).

As the UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres put it: ***“The goals for Sustainable Development are the path that leads us to a more fair, peaceful and prosperous world, and to a healthy planet”***.¹

With the aim to adapting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to the Greek needs and circumstances, a mapping was carried out in 2017 through joint efforts of the interested parties in order to accurately identify the starting point in the country. Eight national priorities were set aiming at:²

1. Promoting a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth.
2. Promoting full-time employment and decent work for all.
3. Dealing with poverty and social discrimination, and the provision of global access to quality health care services.
4. Reducing social and peripheral inequalities while securing equal opportunities for all.
5. Providing high quality devoid of discriminations education.
6. Enhancing the protection and sustainable management of the natural assets as a basis for social prosperity and a transition to a low carbon emissions economy.
7. Developing effective, responsible and transparent institutions.
8. Enhancing open, participatory, democratic procedures and promoting collaboration.

As part of the process of monitoring and reviewing of the 2030 Agenda, states are encouraged to organize and conduct frequent and cohesive monitoring regarding the progress achieved for the SDGs both on a national and local level. Each country is responsible for conducting and directing this monitoring knowing its national context. The aim of this process, which is carried out through the Voluntary National Reviews, is to register and exchange good practices because their application can accelerate the accomplishment of the SDGs.

In the 2018 Voluntary National Review³ for the United Nations, the only one that has been submitted by our country so far, Greece stated a strong commitment to implement the

1 United Nations, Regional Information Center, Unit “The 17 Goals”. <https://unric.org/en/unit-ed-nations-sustainable-development-goals/>

2 Presentation by the Deputy Minister for the Environment and Energy, Mr. Sokratis Famelos, at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

3 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals, **“as they provide an ambitious, visionary and transformative framework for a new, fair and sustainable development course”**. Namely, it underlined that the country needs to focus on the social pillar of sustainable development, and take measures in order to deal with the difficulties various affected groups face. Among the priorities are to alleviate unemployment, particularly among the young and women, reduce social inequalities, make progress in gender equality and to promote social integration for migrants⁴ and other vulnerable groups within the population.

A.2. 2030 Agenda and Migration

As the International Organization for Migration⁵ states, the fact that the 2030 Agenda recognizes and embodies migration as a basic element for development is particularly important. This means that the people with an immigrant background are dealt with not only as a vulnerable group but also as factors that contribute to development. The target 10.7 of the main goal 10 makes a direct reference to immigration stating that the aim is “to reduce inequality within and among countries”. To be more specific, target 10.7 calls for **“the facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”**

Including immigration among the factors that contribute to the implementation of the SDGs not only corresponds to the facts of the modern world, but it also prepares the ground for positive developments in anything that concerns migration policies in the next few years. The global character which is a basic element of the goals can assist the promotion of international cooperation, which is not only a means to implement the goals but it is also an aim in itself for the 2030 Agenda. In other words, the aim is to establish a bilateral relationship, where first the immigration policies improve the development results and secondly, the development policies improve the policies regarding immigration and their practical results.

A.3. The arrival of refugees and migrants in Greece

However, to ensure that “no one should be left behind”, although it was considered a major political priority, it was by no means self-evident in Greece, since the country was in the process of recovering after a long financial crisis. This was so, mainly because the country was faced both with a financial recession and the arrival of large numbers of mixed refugee and migrant flows.

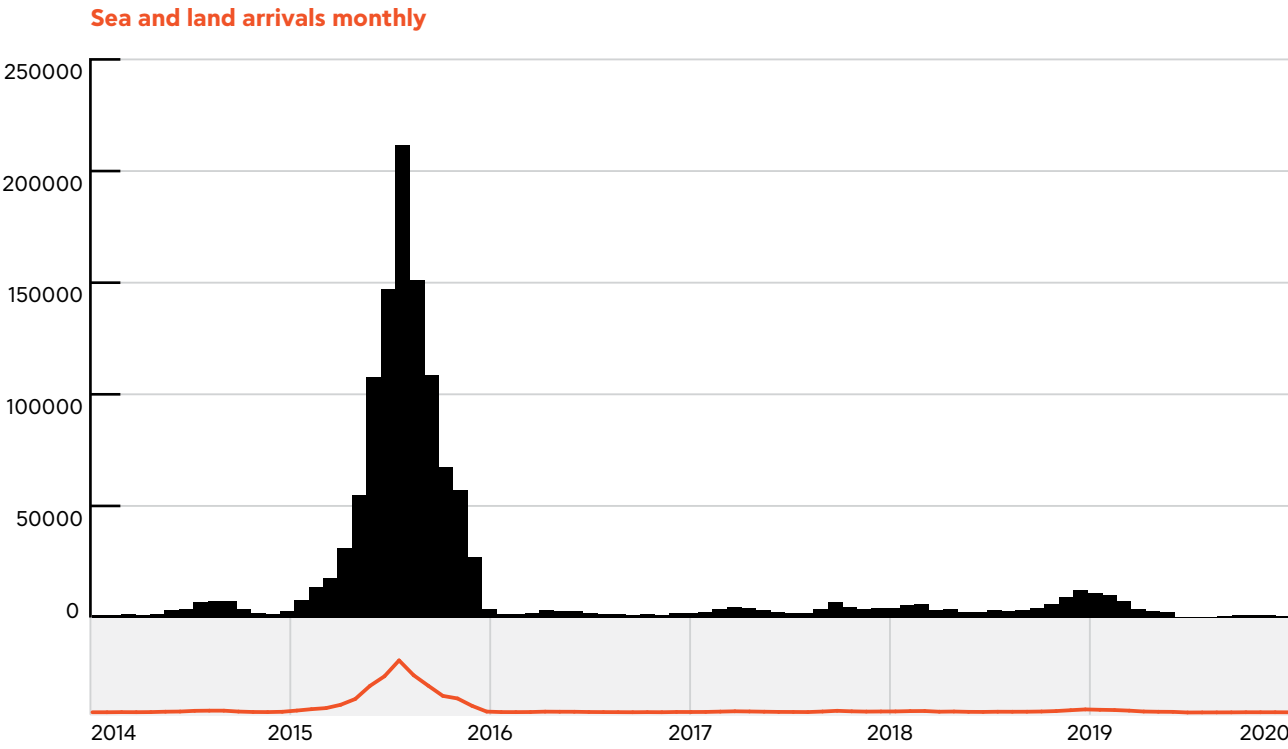
The arrival of refugees and migrants in Greece reached its peak in the spring of 2015 until the spring of 2016. The total numbers for 2015 came to 861,630, before they were reduced to 74,613 in 2019, of whom 59,726 arrived by sea, while 14,887 through the land. We must note that after 2014 the main bulk of the arrivals came by sea. The data provided by UN-

4 According to the “Indicators for Immigrant Integration” – OECD, migrants are considered: those who were born in foreign land but arrived in a country as adults, those who were born in a foreign land but arrived in a country as children, as well as the descendants of the migrants who were born in a country. 18% of the population of the 28 member states of the European Union are migrants and 17% of the population in the 35 OECD states.

5 IOM, 2018, “Migration and the 2030 Agenda: A Guide for Practitioners”, pages 13-14 <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-and-2030-agenda-guide-practitioners>



HCR⁶ are very interesting. To be more specific, the graph seen below shows how arrivals evolved for the period 2014-2019, while the table shows analytically the number of arrivals both through the sea and the land.



Graph 1: The total number of refugee and immigrant arrivals, per month and year (Source: UNHCR)

Previous Years	Sea Arrivals	Land Arrivals	Dead & Missing
2019	59.726	14.887	70
2018	32.494	18.014	174
2017	29.718	6.592	59
2016	173.450	3.784	441
2015	856.723	4.907	799
2014	41.038	2.280	405

Table 1: Analytical registration of the refugee and immigrant arrivals through the land and the sea per year (Source: UNHCR)

According to a recent (March 2019) research carried out by the European Commission the following were the decisive factors that contributed to the reduction of arrivals in Greece and Europe after 2016: a) the EU-Turkey Joint Statement, b) guarding the external borders by the European Border Guard Service and Coastguard Service and c) the cooperation among the member states to secure lawful routes. However, the European Commission points out that there are still issues pending in Greece, like the return and relocation of migrants and refugees, processing asylum requests as well as issues related to the accom-

6 UNHCR: data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179

modation of the refugees. The above issues pinpointed by the European Commission have been frequently highlighted by organizations of the civil society who play an active role in the refugee issue or in the human rights field, underlining the need to adopt policies that will focus on man, while there is an urgent need for strategic planning and operational action.⁷

To sum up, despite the radical reduction of refugee arrivals after 2016, the consequences of the 2015-16 crisis are still tangible. According to a report submitted by Dianeosis referring to figures provided by Eurostat, “there are 579,736 settled (“recognized”) migrants from the previous decades (mainly in big cities, with residence permits – data provided by the EU for 01/01/2017), while assessments for the exact number of refugees/migrants in Greece as a result of the 2015-16 crisis differ, but they range between 50,000-70,000. The asylum applications still pending in 2018 are 66,965” (as seen from the figures provided by the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum).⁸ This number includes the vast majority of those who arrived from 2015 onwards (Eurostat).

A report by Dianeosis, a Greek research institute, mentions: “More than half of the new refugees (approximately 35,000) are women and children. According to UNICEF figures, there were 27,000 children in Greece (underage refugees and migrants) by the end of 2018. A large portion of them were unaccompanied minors, a particularly vulnerable category of the population. To be more specific, the UNHCR registered 4,616 unaccompanied minors in September 2019” (UNHCR Greece Factsheet, September 2019).

This evidence is very important because, as it will be mentioned in the next units, it is related to the SDGs 4 and 5. Goal 4 specifically refers to “ensuring free, equitable and quality education promoting opportunities for lifelong learning” (target 4.1 “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” and 4.5 **“By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”** have a special meaning for the issue of this Report) and Goal 5 refers to “achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.”

A. 4. The stance of the European Union

The European Union chose to adopt an stance of transferring the issue to the member-states located on its outer borders that received the largest bulk of those applying for asylum, instead of establishing a permanent mechanism of fair allocation of responsibilities, thus succumbing to the pressures of countries who held a hostile stance towards the refugee and immigrant populations. As the International Observatory for Human Rights⁹

7 Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, The European Council and the Council, “Progress report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration”. ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190306_com-2019-126-report_en.pdf

8 Ministry of Immigration & Asylum, Statistics of the Asylum Service (from 07.06.2013 to 29.02.2020) asylo.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Greek_Asylum_Service_data_February_2020_gr.pdf

9 International Observatory for Human Rights (2016) “European Union: The way the refugee crisis is dealt with is insufficient.” www.hrw.org/el/news/2016/01/27/286002



mentioned in 2016 **“narrow national governmental interests quite frequently displaced rational political reactions against the refugee crisis”**, while relocations from Greece, which was the external border country with the largest influx, were particularly delayed.

Following the procedures related to European law infringement, the European Council activated article 7 of the European Union Treaty for the violations committed by Hungary. The European Commission activated relevant violation procedures against member-states, like Poland and the Czech Republic, as they failed to abide by their obligations within the mechanism framework, like relocation, and refused to receive refugees in their territory invoking their sovereignty rights. At the same time, the Turkey-EU Joint Statement proved to be ineffective, because its implementation led thousands of people being trapped in the Greek islands of the North-East Aegean Sea, under conditions that have been described as dehumanizing by international organizations which have either permanent envoys or they have made ad hoc visits in Greece in order to perform inspections.

Nevertheless, after the ten-year-long financial crisis – combined with the country’s lack of preparation in order to receive the refugees due to absence of relevant policies – the European Union has supported Greece by activating the following funding schemes: a) the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, b) the Internal Security Fund, c) the Emergency Support Instrument and d) the national projects TAME and TEA.¹⁰

A.5. The reception conditions in Greece

When arriving in Greece, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are in a grave condition, as they have already experienced extreme conditions. According to a research carried out by the organization Action On Armed Violence,¹¹ 2017, showed that of the refugees questioned who have applied for asylum in Greece: a) 92% had been affected by incidents of explosive violence, b) 75% had experienced air raids, c) 83% had experienced bombarding, d) 69% had experienced attacks with makeshift explosive mechanisms, e) 53% said their houses had been destroyed. In the same research, it is registered that, despite the relevant need, only 20% had received psychological support.

As it is noted in the “Comparative Analysis for the Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Greece” report compiled by Dianeosis,¹² the aforementioned conditions render the need to provide support of the utmost importance right after the refugees arrive in Greece as a receiving country. Still, timely and effective provision of psychological care is obstructed by the lack of funding and (frequently) the poor conditions in the retention centers. The fact that any kind of help is fragmentary is a major problem, and this happens because it is usu-

10 According to the evidence provided by Dianeosis in October 2018, European funds of 1.69 billion Euros had been so that the refugee issue would be managed in Greece {a} 561 million Euros to National Projects (long-term funding) for the period 2014-2020, b) 480 million Euros was given as emergency aid (through TAME and TEA), of which 233 million Euros was made available directly to the Greek Authorities, while the rest was disposed to UNHCR, the International Organization of Migrants and the European Asylum Service, c) 650 million Euros to international organizations and NGOs within the Emergency Support Instrument framework}.

11 Action On Armed Violence (2017), “The Refugee Explosion - Case study: Greece”.[aoav.org.uk/2017/refugee-explosion-case-study-greece](https://www.aoav.org.uk/2017/refugee-explosion-case-study-greece)

12 Dianeosis (January 2020), “Comparative Analysis for the Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Greece. Personal Experiences, The Best Practices, Policy Proposals”, page 24.



ally interrupted when refugees are relocated in various centers or they depart for various reasons from the retention centers. Among others, the data provided above are connected to Goal 3 about “ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages” particularly combined with target 3.4.

A.6. Hotspots: A grave reality

Widely known as hotspots (Reception and Identification Centers – RIC) are facilities where the procedures of the original reception and registration of the individuals that arrive at the borders are performed. As far as Greece is concerned, after the EU-Turkey Joint Statement was issued (March 2016), the procedures applied at RICs have undergone several alterations causing insecurity to the individuals who have to take part in them in order to proceed to the mainland and submit an asylum request. In Greece, there are five islands in the Aegean where RICs are in operation: at Moria (Lesvos), Vathi (Samos), Pyli (Kos), VIAL (Chios) and Lepida (Leros) and at location Fylakio in Evros.

After five years of operation¹³ both in Greece and Italy, the approach of hotspots, which is considered ineffective, is one of the basic elements of the European Union migration policy as far as controlling mobility at the EU external borders is concerned. It must be noted that these centers are not meant to provide accommodation for long periods of time, but current practice disproves it, and in many cases individuals have stayed there for longer than a year under crowded conditions and violations of fundamental rights.¹⁴ The conditions of life in RICs are in stark contrast to the statement of the target 10.7 about “facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”

Apart from hygiene and overpopulation issues, security is among the critical issues. International reports mention the difficult conditions that vulnerable groups (women, children) are faced with. In November 2017, the International Observatory for Human Rights interviewed 25 women and girls seeking asylum that lived in the hotspot in Moria, Lesvos. The women talked about repeated harassment, gender-based threats of violence, a prevailing sense of insecurity and health hazards. They also noted that the authorities did not respond to their reports and failed to take enough measures to ensure their safety.¹⁵ The adverse conditions for women at the hotspots come in contrast to the statement made by Greece in the Voluntary Review, 2018, about the promotion of gender equality (SDG 5 and

13 European Commission (2015b), “The hotspot approach to manage exceptional migration flows”. ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2_hotspots_el.pdf

14 At the camp in Moria, Lesvos, which had originally been designed to accommodate only 3,000 people, before it was burned to the ground in September 2020 and the construction of a new one in Kara Tepe, there lived over 20,000 refugees and migrants in particularly harsh conditions, while in the camp next to the RIC there were 2,000 people living mainly in tents, even in containers and makeshift accommodation (Dianeosis from Oxfam). The weather conditions were frequently adverse. Similar conditions are found in the hotspot in Samos, where on the perimeter, there live more than 7,600 people, that is, 12 times more than the official capacity which is for only 648 people.

15 To Mov (April, 2018), “Greece: Hazards for Women and Children Seeking Asylum”. tomov.gr/2018/04/22/megaloi-oi-kindunoi-gia-prosfyges-gynaikes-sthn-ellada/



SDG 10, target 10.7). To be more specific, the Report¹⁶ mentions that particular care is given to eradicate gender inequalities and integrate migrants and other groups into the Greek society.

Things are particularly difficult for unaccompanied minors. According to the data provided by the National Center for Social Solidarity (NCSS), February 2020, the number of unaccompanied minors in Greece “was assessed” at 5,463.¹⁷ in March 2020. In accordance with the data provided by NCSS, Caritas¹⁸ assessed that more than 1,800 unaccompanied children lived in the Greek hotspots. The vast majority were in Moria, Lesbos. The “Civil Movement Coexistence and Communication in the Aegean Sea” sent a letter to the Prime Minister on the issue, mentioning that: **“The Prime Minister recently undertook personally the responsibility for the care of unaccompanied children. Since then, apart from some statements made by the lady he appointed as Coordinator, we have seen nothing in action, no application of any project whatsoever for the unaccompanied children.”**¹⁹ Within the premises of the hotspots, where there is an acute increase of mental health problems, suicide attempts and self-inflicted injuries,²⁰ an increasing number of children resort to self-inflicted injuries or suicide attempts. Unaccompanied children, according to the relevant reports, suffer from insomnia, depression, incessant headaches and acute stress.²¹

On June 18, 2020, Adalbert Jahnz, spokesperson for the European Commission, announced that the project for the relocation of unaccompanied children refugees from Greece would start again. He mentioned that “as restrictions {due to the pandemic} are starting to ease, we are preparing ourselves for the basic stage of the project that is coordinated by the Commission.”²² On July 8, 2020, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UNHCR and UNICEF, welcomed the recent relocation of 49 unaccompanied children from Greece to Portugal and Finland. The children had been living for several months in overcrowded RICs in the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Chios and Kos.²³

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- 16 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 45. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf
- 17 92.5% of them are boys and 7.5% are girls, while 9% of them are below 14. The majority is from Afghanistan (44%), Pakistan (21%), Syria (11%), while another 24% are of different nationality.
- 18 Caritas (March 2020) “Call for relocation of unaccompanied minors.” caritas.gr/advocacy-gr/karitas-eyropis-ekklisi-metegkatastasi-ton-asynodeyton-anilikon-paidion
- 19 LIFO (January 2020), “Moria: More than 1,000 unaccompanied children – ‘They live under marginally acceptable conditions’”. www.lifo.gr/now/greece/265770/moria-pano-apo-1000-ta-asynodeyta-paidia-epivionoyn-se-oriaka-anektes-synthikes
- 20 Dianeosis (January 2020), “Comparative analysis for the Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Greece. Personal Experiences, Best Practices, Policy Proposals”, page 38.
- 21 Ethnos (March 2020), “65 organizations demand that 1,800 unaccompanied refugee children be relocated from the hotspots.” www.ethnos.gr/ellada/92245_metegkatastasi-1800-asynodeyton-prosfygopoylon-apo-ta-hotspots-zitoy-n-65-organoseis
- 22 Naftemporiki (June 2020), “European Commission: The relocation of the unaccompanied children refugees from Greece starts.” www.naftemporiki.gr/story/1610147/komision-ksekina-i-metegkatastasi-asynodeyton-anilikon-prosfugon-apo-tin-ellada
- 23 UNHCR (July 2020), “UN Organizations welcome the recent relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece, asking for further action and solidarity.” www.unhcr.org/gr/15955-metegkatastasi-asynodeutwn-paidiwn.html



B. ACTIONS FOR THE INTEGRATION IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The issue of the integration of migrants and recognized refugees in the Greek society has been a hotly debated one in the last few years. From the beginning of the '90s, when a large number of migrants from Balkan countries sought a better life in Greece getting away from conditions of political and social instability in their country of origin, education, health and access to the job market were the basic pillars of integration that were under discussion. However, the weak or even non-existent integration policies laid the burden of resolving critical issues on people who had to face large bureaucratic obstacles and the hardships of everyday life.

At the same time, the absence of integration policies allowed the articulation of bigotry on behalf of nationalistic, anti-immigration voices, and that skyrocketed with the first signs of the economic crisis back in 2008. This sort of rhetoric caused an informal "competition" between the locals and civilians from third countries as far as access to social security services and the job market are concerned, which should be a priority for the indigenous population and not for "aliens". The fragmentary legislative and political interventions led gradually to 2015 and the massive arrivals of refugee and migrant populations that made it clear there was need for a cohesive integration framework.

B. 1. Significant Legislative Initiatives

Since 2015, some significant initiatives took place so that an integration policy was designed and these policies are connected to target 10.2 about "empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status" and also target 10.3 about "ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome through, among others, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard." For instance, it is mentioned:

- **Revising the Naturalization Law (4332/2015):** the code for Greek naturalization was validated in 2004 and since then it has been amended twice, in 2010 and 2015. When it was amended in 2015, this was meant to have it aligned with the Greek legislation and the European directives 2011/98EU and 2014/36/EU. Still, the legislation on naturalization needs to be improved so that more realistic and transparent prerequisites are set for one to obtain the Greek nationality in a way that will enable rather than set even more hindrances to the people who live and are active for years in the Greek territory.
- **The Migration Law (4375/2016)** aligns the Greek legislation with the EU directive 2013/32/EU and further empowers the importance attributed to social integration issues. It is important that this law defines the conditions of access to employment of those who are recognized to have the right to receive international protection, the ones applying for international protection and the individuals who have been granted a residence permit for humanitarian purposes in Greece (article 68-71).

- An action of the utmost importance was the establishment of the **Ministry of Immigration Policy** in 2016, in order to enhance coordination, surveillance and cohesion of the policies for the original reception of civilians from third countries, granting asylum and their social integration, as marked in the Voluntary Review in 2018.²⁴

B. 2. Monitoring of the implementation of specific SDGs

B. 2. 1. Social integration of migrants (SDG 10)

The stance of the Greek society

As far as the stance of the Greek society regarding the integration of refugees and migrants related to SDG 10 and mainly with target 10.2 is concerned, it should be noted that, according to data provided by OECD²⁵ since 2017, two thirds of the indigenous Greek population believe that aliens harm Greece as a place of residence, they harm the economy and undermine their culture. The results of an opinion survey carried out in June 2020 by Aboutpeople for the news portal NEWS 24/7,²⁶ show similar points of view, where almost 2 out of 3 (62.4%) of the indigenous population consider that the refugees cannot be integrated in the Greek society, while in the same survey²⁷ half the people interviewed believe that the presence of migrants in Greece during the last few decades has a rather negative or negative impact. Finally, it is indicated that almost 50% stated that they wouldn't like to have refugees as neighbors.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that at the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015-2016, the inhabitants of the islands that received a large number of arrivals, as mentioned in a news report by euronews euronews²⁸ **"the majority of them reacted positively. Both locals and volunteers started organizing themselves to provide help"**. Thanks to their actions, some emergencies were dealt with, inciting a movement on the Internet that called for a Nobel prize for Peace nomination for the Greek islanders. Solidarity towards refugees was one of the basic characteristics of that period that started in 2015 and in many cases, it is still obvious despite the voices that seek to smother any solidarity stances and reactions. Both movements and civilians have acted decisively to offer support for the refugees either providing material aid (food and other useful objects) or promoting publicly views and facts

24 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, p.47. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

25 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", p. 128 www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

26 NEWS 24/7 (2020), "Civilians believe the refugees are not integrated in the Greek society." www.news247.gr/20-20/oi-polites-den-theoroy-n-pos-oi-prosfyges-ensomatonontai-stin-elliniki-koinonia.7664154.html

27 NEWS 24/7 (2020), "Survey 20/20: Citizens say "yes" for refugees to be relocated in the Greek mainland." www.news247.gr/20-20/ereyna-20-20-oi-polites-lene-nai-sti-metafora-prosfygon-stin-ipeirotiki-ellada.7664001.html

28 euronews (2016), "Refugee crisis: 'The heroes of the Aegean Sea' deserve a Nobel nomination". gr.euronews.com/2016/02/04/refugee-crisis-a-nobel-peace-prize-for-the-heroes-of-the-aegean

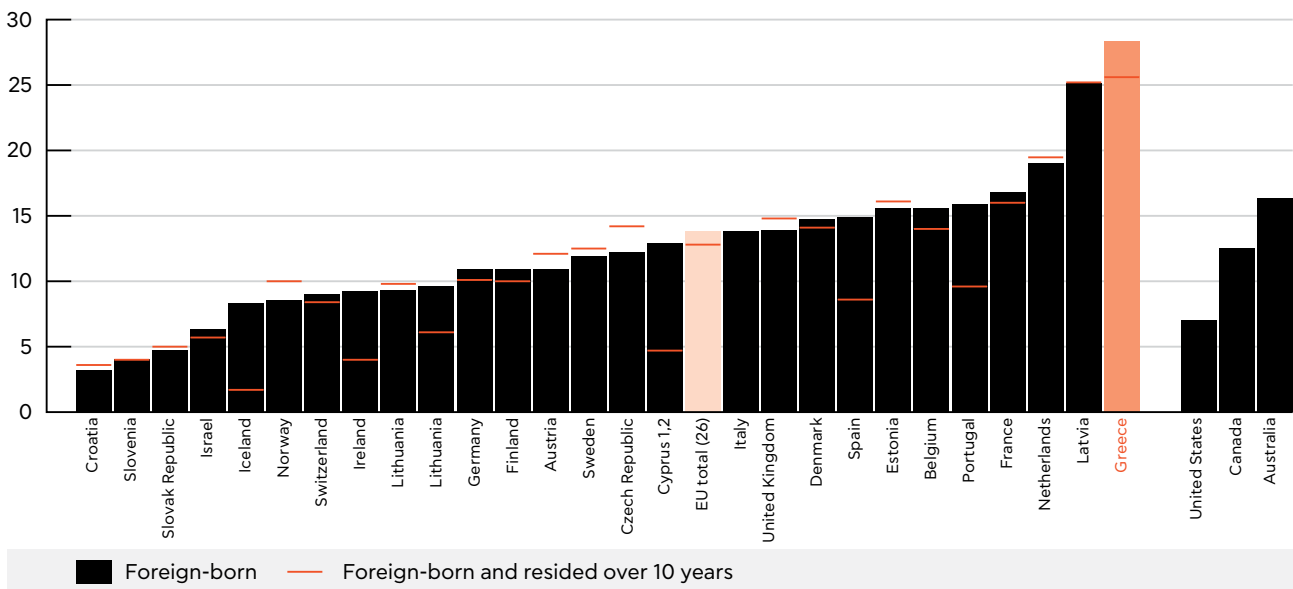


about what is actually going on in the field. We have to mention the contribution of the Patriotic Institution of Social Care and View (PIKPA) along with that at RIC in Moria and the center at Kara Tepe, where a substantial number of vulnerable individuals received support.

The experience of discrimination

In the European Union, 14% of third country citizens have stated that they have experienced some form of discrimination based on their nationality or race. The highest percentages among the OECD,²⁹ countries are registered in Greece, as more than a quarter of the population who have been born in some other country feel part of a group that is discriminated against. This is depicted in the following graph:

Self-reported discrimination by length of residence



Graph 2: Percentage of migrants who report cases of being discriminated against in OECD countries. Greece is in the top position.

According to the Eurostat data³⁰ (2020), (2020), in the European Union as a whole, we can see substantial discrepancies between the level of social integration of the civilians outside the EU and the indigenous populations of the EU member states in fields such as poverty, education and access to the job market. Individuals from countries outside the EU face a lot more difficult conditions in all the above-mentioned sectors in comparison to the EU citizens.

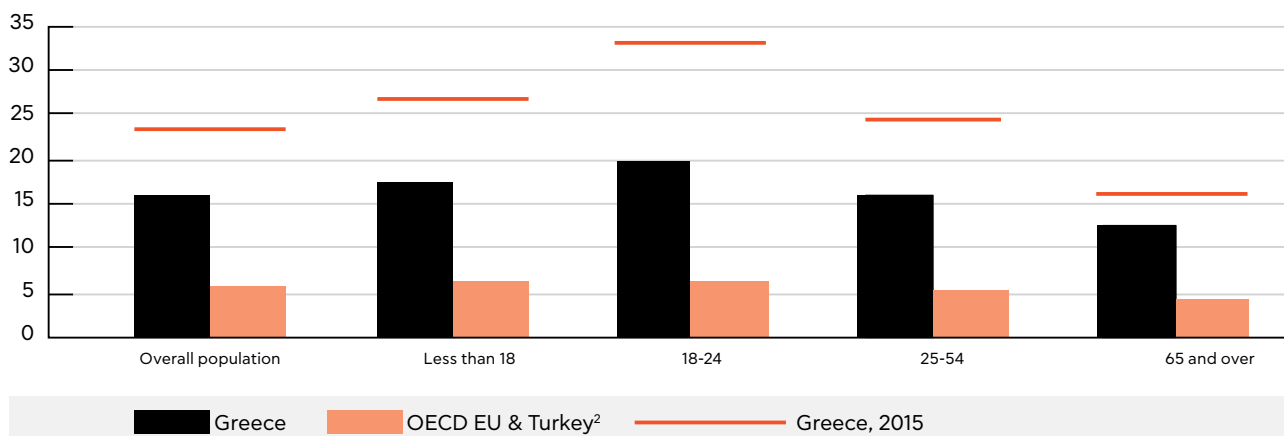
29 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 137. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

30 Eurostat (2020), "Sustainable development in the European Union - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context", page 189. ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/11011074/KS-02-20-202-EN-N.pdf/334a8cfe-636a-bb8a-294a-73a052882f7f

B.2.2. Zero Poverty (SDG 1)

Dealing with poverty was mentioned as a basic goal in the Greek Voluntary Review in 2018³¹ to the UN. To be more specific, it stated that the goal was to reconstruct productively the economy, creating a competitive job market devoid of exclusions with the aim to reducing unemployment and protecting working rights, which suffered a sudden major blow in 2008 due the financial crisis and the budgetary constraints. Eurostat sets as a poverty line 60% of the average income in every country.³² According to the data provided by OECD "Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets 2019",³³ in Greece 14.4% of the population live under the poverty line (50% of the average income) as compared to 14.33% as a whole in OECD (min 5.40% Iceland, max 17.80% Israel).

Percent of population groups living in households reporting severe material deprivation, 2019 or latest year



Graph 3: "Unemployment rates are higher among the young." The graph presents the unemployment rates in all age groups in Greece, as well as the average numbers in OECD (Source OECD Economic Surveys, Greece, 2020).

In the National Reform Programme for 2019, the first one that was submitted after the completion of the economic adjustment programme in August 2018, the National Goals for Poverty were mentioned as they are set within the framework of the European strategy "Europe 2020".³⁴ What is of great importance for this analysis is the third goal, which is not

31 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 41. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

32 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 106. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/97892264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

33 OECD (2019), Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets 2019: An Assessment of Where OECD Countries Stand, OECD Publishing, Paris, page 128. read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/measuring-distance-to-the-sdg-targets-2019_a8caf3fa-en#page130

34 The first goal is to "reduce the number of people who run the risk of becoming poor or/and are subject to material deprivation or/and live in households without any members holding a job by 450,000 by 2020, that is, a reduction of the total number from 28% in 2008, to 24% in 2020." The second goal is to combat child poverty by 100,000 people aged 0-17.



quantified under the title **“the construction of a social safety network against social seclusion”**, which aims at securing access to all services for all.³⁵

As far as the social integration of the refugees/migrants is concerned, the data provided by Eurostat³⁶ are very interesting since they compare the situation of civilians from third countries residing in EU member states with the one of civilians of EU member states residing in their country of origin. In 2018, almost 40% of the civilians of third countries faced the danger of income poverty, in comparison to 15.3% of the indigenous population (civilians of EU). The percentages of poverty have remained rather stable for both groups since 2013. The percentage of real income poverty for the citizens of third countries was 23.5% higher compared to that of the citizens of EU states in 2018.

As far as migrants are concerned, in Greece **40% now live under the poverty line, according to the OECD data for 2017**. At the same time, the future looks rather bleak for the future generations. In the OECD countries, half the children of the immigrant households live under the poverty line, compared to one quarter of the indigenous households. In EU, the percentage is lower (40%), but it still remains double the one of the indigenous households. Greece belongs to those countries (along with Spain and the USA), where the descendants of the migrants run a greater poverty risk.³⁷

In 2015, the average annual income of an immigrant in Greece was only 5,428 Euros, placing Greece second from below of all the OECD,³⁸ countries, far lower than the average European (12,510 Euros) and the average OECD (15,389 Euros) income. Greece also has the greatest discrepancy between the average income for the migrants and the average income for the indigenous people. The adverse conditions alien citizens have to face in Greece are brought forward by the data of the Research on Income and Living Conditions

35 In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, the review published by the Greek Statistics Service is very encouraging since the basic indicators continue to improve for 2017 in comparison to the period 2015-2016. The indicators show a reduction of the risk of poverty or social seclusion, child poverty, material deprivation. The numbers are positive for 2018 as well, according to the National Reform Programme for 2020. To be more specific, the course is as follows: in 2008, the number of people facing the risk of poverty and social seclusion in Greece was 3,043,000 (28.1% of the population), while in 2018 3,348,500 people (31.8% of the population), reduced from 2017 by 353,300 people (3,701,800 people or 34.8% of the population).

36 Eurostat (2020), “Sustainable development in the European Union - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context”, page 189.

37 OECD/European Union (2018) “Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration”, page 181. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-n.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

38 OECD (2019), Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets 2019: An Assessment of Where OECD Countries Stand, OECD Publishing, Paris, page 20.

in Households carried out by the ELSTAT³⁹ for 2018 – which refers to incomes made in 2017.⁴⁰

Age groups	Residents in Greece	2015	2016	2017	2018
18-64	Greek residents	37,4%	38%	36.5%	33.0%
	Foreign citizens	64,3%	59,7%	62.9%	56.5%
	Citizens of EU	49,1%	47,7%	53.3%	45.0%
	Citizens of third countries	67,1%	61,6%	64.3 %	58.4%
18+	Greek residents	33,4%	33,6%	32.7 %	29.3%
	Foreign citizens	63,6%	59,2%	62.4 %	53.7%
	Citizens of EU	45,1%	44,5%	48.2%	38.3%
	Citizens of third countries	67,1%	61,8%	64.6 %	56.8%

Table 2: Population at the risk of poverty or/and social seclusion (after the social transfers) by age and nationality (2015-2018) (Source: National Reform Programme 2020, page 95).

The aforementioned developments were the result only of the direct measures to face the humanitarian crisis (2015-2016). At the same time, under the terms of social solidarity, an important step forward is the fact that now refugees or asylum seekers can enroll in the unemployment registry of the Greek Employment Organization, OAED, as their residence permit allows them to access the job market (National Reform Programme).⁴¹ In order to establish a social safety network against social seclusion, which would ensure access to the basic services for all citizens, a system of guaranteed minimum income was established, a decisive step to protect the most vulnerable social groups⁴² - where all refugees were entitled to participate.⁴³

Still, with the aim to halting refugee arrivals, in March 2020, the Greek Parliament voted a restriction of the financial support to refugees who have been granted asylum. According to an amendment of the Ministry of Immigration voted on March 5, 2020, both the financial

39 ELSTAT (June 2019), news report: "Danger for Poverty". www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/f532929a-3cd7-57c2-43a5-5307f601d66f

40 As the data show, the percentage of people who ran the risk of poverty or social seclusion came to 31.8% (3,348,500 people) of the total population in the country, presenting, in comparison to the relevant data for 2017, a reduction by 3.0 per cent (3,701,800 people, that is, 34.8% of the population). However, what is of particular interest is the fact that for ages 18 to 64, 33.0% of the Greeks run the risk of poverty or social seclusion, while the corresponding percentage for aliens living in Greece was 56.5%, while for aliens outside EU countries the percentage is 58.4%

41 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April 2019), page 52 www.espa.gr/el/Documents/2127/National_Reform_Programme_Apr2019.pdf

42 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April 2020), page 67. oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf

43 Naftemporiki (June 2020) "UNHCR: Safety network-inclusion opportunities to legitimate refugees". www.naftemporiki.gr/story/1605095/upati-armosteia-dixtu-asfaleias-eukairies-entaksis-stous-anagnorismenous-prosfuges



aid and the provision of aid in material goods for refugees are concluded within 30 days after they have been granted asylum, while they will still be entitled to participate in the International Organization for Migration programmes, and also in the social programmes of the Ministry of Employment, like child support, accommodation benefit, guaranteed minimum income.⁴⁴ Practically, this means that “the grace period for recognized refugees is reduced from six months to 30 days in order to transfer from the provision of organized accommodation and basic support to independent residence”,⁴⁵ a fact that ignores the reality and the ramifications of the absence of cohesive inclusion policies in Greece. UNHCR expressed its concerns regarding the aforementioned developments in June, 2020 – when the new regulation was implemented.⁴⁶

B.2.3. Good health and Well Being (SDG 3)

In the Voluntary National Review⁴⁷ of the Secretariat General of the Greek Government for 2018 about the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, it was underlined that the design of policies for health based on the concept of health as a social value and prerogative, is in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy, which states that investing in health consists a basis prerequisite for the protection of human dignity, it combats poverty and inequalities, it secures social continuity and economic growth. Within the framework of this approach, some policies designed by the Ministry of Health connected to an effective realization of the SDGs were implemented.⁴⁸

It is worth mentioning that both in OECD and EU countries, the percentage (5.5%) of migrants and indigenous population who mention uncovered medical needs is more or less the same. However, Greece is among the countries (along with Sweden, Estonia, Italy) where significant discrepancies are observed between the indigenous population and migrants from third countries, as one out of four migrants reports uncovered health needs in contrast to one out of six of the indigenous residents. It must be noted that the percentage doubled as a result of the economic crisis.

44 Star.gr (March 2020) “Immigrant benefits get the axe”. www.star.gr/eidiseis/oikonomia/492542/metanastes-telos-sta-epidomata

45 *presenza* (June 2020), “UNHCR calls Greece to activate a safety net and inclusion opportunities for the recognized refugees”. www.presenza.com/el/2020/06/h-upath-armosteia-kalei-thn-ellada-na-energopoihsei-ena-dixtu-asfaleias/

46 UNHCR (June 2020), “UNHCR calls Greece to activate a safety net and inclusion opportunities for the recognized refugees”. www.unhcr.org/gr/14769-eukairies-entaxis-gia-tous-anagnorismenous-prosfyges.html

47 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 43. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

48 In 2018, Greece set as a priority global access to quality health services. Law 4368/2016 and a Joint Ministerial Decision allowed free access to the public health care system for any uninsured citizens and vulnerable social groups. This was made possible by reducing bureaucracy. As far as the contribution to pharmaceutical expenditure, a new system was introduced based on income criteria in order to relieve the vulnerable social groups. Additionally, refugees who needed constant medical care and they live in the country got the opportunity to be insured through a health care card issued at the hospitals.



B.2.4. Quality Education (SDG 4)

It is necessary to provide education both for refugees and migrants so that they acquire the necessary qualifications that will allow them to become part of the financial – but also the social – network of the host country. In the OECD countries,⁴⁹ the population with low education standards is on average ¼ of the total population. This is true both for the indigenous population and migrants. However, especially in Europe, the immigrant population with a low educational level is higher than that of the average OECD countries, as it reaches 1/3 (39% of citizens from third countries and 26% of those born within EU). In 2018, there were 13 million migrants with very low education in EU.

In the Voluntary Review, 2018,⁵⁰ Greece declared its adamant commitment to offer equal and quality education for all. Nevertheless, there is a significant discrepancy as regards the educational level of migrants and the indigenous population. 38.7% of migrants aged 15-64 enjoyed a low educational level in 2017, in comparison to 26.1% of the corresponding percentage of the indigenous population in the same age group. Contrary to that, 17.1% of migrants enjoy a higher educational level as compared to 31.3% of the indigenous population.⁵¹ In our country, from 2011 to 2016, participation in adult education for migrants and indigenous people aged 25-64 had a positive, upward direction, but progress was minimal and the gap between the two groups was vast (0.7% for migrants, 5.6% for the indigenous people).⁵²

At the same time, good knowledge of a host country's language is related to a long stay in this place. In the EU countries, six out of ten settled migrants are already sufficiently familiar with the local language – 20% more than more recent migrants. Greece, along with Slovakia and Germany, is among the countries with the greatest lack of knowledge of the host language among the 35 OECD countries.⁵³

As underlined in the National Reform Programme for 2019,⁵⁴ Premature Drop-Out (PDO) or student leak (SL) from the educational system is considered today one of the most important and persistent educational problems on a global scale. In our country, prema-

49 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 66. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

50 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 50. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

51 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 67. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

52 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 71. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

53 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 68. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

54 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April 2019), pages 43-44. www.espa.gr/el/Documents/2127/National_Reform_Programme_Apr2019.pdf



ture drop-out in 2017 was reduced by 3% and was around 6% - among the lowest rates in the EU and much lower than the 10% target of the strategy “Europe 2020”. Generally, it was stated that, to combat premature drop-out, activities and actions were planned on a three-year-long term basis, putting the emphasis on the vulnerable social groups, like: establishing host classes within the framework of the Educational Priority Zones, the operation of Structures for Support and Education of Refugees (SSER), “the strategic planning to provide education to children refugees beyond the premises of basic education on the grounds of the strategic planning of the Ministry of Immigration Policy”.

In the National Reform Programme for 2020,⁵⁵ it is stated that the Ministry establishes and enhances the Structures for Support and Education of Refugees and the Educational Priority Areas (EPA). To be more specific, “it is about primary and secondary education structures functioning in areas where the educational level is quite low generally, there is a high drop-out rate and low access to tertiary education. The Ministry has appointed Educational Coordinators for Refugees (73 up to the present day) and has hired 36 teachers in order to cover SSER and 176 for EPA. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education has secured sufficient funding to transport refugee children to and from the schools, thus achieving an effective solution for the problem of constant lack of funding from the International Organization for Migration”.

An important action on the educational level was the inclusion programme for the children from third countries as a whole, who reside in centers or hospitality structures in the Greek state or the UNHCR in the educational system for school year 2016-2017.⁵⁶ Apart from that, the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP)⁵⁷ within the framework of reporting its actions for the period 2015-2018, reports actions that concern the effective integration of refugees in the educational system.⁵⁸ To be more specific, taking into consideration equal opportunities in education, IEP provided additional material for the course of the Greek language at SSER and even designed a search and registration platform for material that was produced during the Intercultural Educational Programmes that can be further utilized.

55 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April 2020) page 58. [oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf](https://www.oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf)

56 The programme was implemented based on a plan laid out by the Ministry of Education and a Joint Ministerial Decision. In all, 20,000 refugee children were incorporated in 800 host classes. Structures for Support and Education of Refugees (SSER) were created within the school premises in the Regional Administrations of Primary and Secondary Education, wherever there are accommodation centers. The ministerial decision saw that 10-20 students would participate in every SSER class and teaching would take place in the afternoon (2-4 p.m.). There was also an Educational Coordinator for Refugees (ECR). The programme was organized and monitored by the Monitoring, Management and Coordination Group with the aid of the Asylum Fund.

57 Institute for Educational Policy, Minutes 2015-2018. www.esos.gr/sites/default/files/articles-leg-acy/2019-07-29_pepragmena_iep_2015-20181.pdf

58 To be more specific, after the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs decided to establish the Structures for Support and Education of Refugees (SSER) in public schools, IEP compiled Open Analytical Programmes in Greek, Mathematics, English, Art, Physical Education, IT (starting from school year 2017-2018). Additionally, IEP developed a framework to process and approve requests for the implementation of educational programmes within the accommodation facilities by NGOs and international organizations.



B.2.5. Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8)

In the Voluntary Review⁵⁹ 2018, it was mentioned that promoting full-time employment and decent work for all consisted one of the basic priorities of the Greek government. The prolonged recession since 2010 led GDP to shrink by 25%, business closed and unemployment increased. The job market is characterized by high unemployment rates, which reached their peak in 2013 (27.8%), but since then, things have improved. The following table provided by ELSTAT gives us elaborate data:

**Employed, unemployed, financially inactive and unemployment percentage (%)
October 2014-2019**

	October					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Employed	3.542.189	3.623.442	3.662.568	3.761.155	3.860.593	3.926.163
Unemployed	1.243.744	1.179.586	1.112.430	1.000.276	878.982	780.913
Financially inactive	3.333.441	3.271.149	3.259.512	3.240.600	3.223.307	3.210.319
Unemployment rate	26,0	24,6	23,3	21,0	18,5	16,6

Table 3: Aggregate number of the unemployed (Source ELSTAT) ⁶⁰

The data about the immigrant population are far more negative. In all OECD and EU countries, migrants have higher unemployment rates compared to the indigenous population. In the European Union, to be more exact, the discrepancies are particularly important for migrants coming outside the EU. It must be underlined that OECD describes the age group 15-65 as the potentially employable population.

After the global recession, the employment rates dropped in all OECD and EU countries. Greece and other Southern European countries (Spain, Italy) received large numbers of migrants in the last few years while they were tortured by the financial crisis. In these countries, employment rates among migrants dropped from 5 to 13 per cent, at least twice as much as the equivalent of the indigenous population. In 2017, employment rates for aliens in Greece was 52.7%, pretty close to the equivalent 53.6 of the local population, while it was reduced by 13.4% compared to the decade before 2006-2007 (an equivalent reduction for the indigenous population by 6.7%).⁶¹

59 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 35. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

60 ELSTAT (2019), "Newsletter: Survey on Work Force". www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/d551f104-0148-eb3f-1328-ad90f72f7498

61 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 73. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4



According to data provided by OECD⁶² for 2017, Greece belongs to the new migration destinations, welcoming low education migrants, who turn to jobs that require minimal specialization. The migrants who came outside EU with a low educational level before the crisis in Greece, had job opportunities. But the crisis cast a blow on their fields of employment, causing the loss of many posts of work. Naturally, there are many migrants who arrived in Greece just before or during the financial crisis, being unable to be included in the job market. It is characteristic that from 2006-07 to 2017, the unemployment rates for migrants rose by 20 per cent,⁶³ while, since the financial crisis back in 2007-08 (until 2017), the financial situation of the migrants had not seen any improvement.

In the European Union, finding work is particularly difficult for migrants from third countries, whose unemployment rates (for all educational levels) is almost double that of the indigenous population. The difference goes up by at least 8 per cent in most Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Luxemburg and Switzerland. In Greece, which was particularly stricken by the financial crisis, the unemployment rates for migrants reached approximately 30% in relation to 20.8% of the locals in 2017 – the worst record among the OECD countries⁶⁴ (see the table below) – while a large percentage is faced with long-term unemployment.

	15-64			Low-educated			Highly educated	
	Foreign-born	Native-born		Foreign-born	Native-born		Foreign-born	Native-born
Greece	29,9	20,8	Spain	28,8	24,4	Greece	27,4	16,1
Spain	23,4	16,1	Greece	27,7	24,3	Spain	17,1	9,1
Belgium	16,4	6,5	Sweden	27,7	13,3	Cyprus 1,2	12,4	11,3
Finland	16,0	8,3	Belgium	24,4	13,6	Finland	11,8	4,8
France	15,4	8,6	Croatia	23,0	19,9	Italy	11,0	6,1
Sweden	15,2	4,5	France	20,2	16,3	Turkey	11,0	12,8
Croatia	15,1	14,8	Ireland	19,4	16,0	France	10,3	4,6
Italy	14,2	11,0	Finland	19,1	18,5	Belgium	10,2	3,4
Cyprus 1,2	13,5	14,4	Austria	19,0	10,1	Sweden	10,0	2,3
Turkey	12,0	11,1	Latvia	18,9	19,2	Denmark	8,4	4,0
EU total (28)	11,7	7,4	EU total (28)	17,5	14,9	Ireland	7,9	4,3
Austria	10,7	4,2	Norway	17,4	8,6	EU total (28)	7,7	4,2
Ireland	10,4	8,4	Italy	15,8	15,9	Croatia	7,6	8,7
Portugal	10,1	9,1	Denmark	14,3	8,6	Portugal	7,5	6,4
Norway	10,1	3,6	Cyprus 1,2	13,6	20,2	Switzerland	7,2	2,2

62 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 29. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

63 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 77. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

64 OECD/European Union (2018) "Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration", page 77. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4



Denmark	9,9	5,0	Netherlands	13,3	7,7	Norway	7,1	2,0
Poland	9,4	4,9	OECD total (34)	12,2	9,7	Poland	7,0	2,4
Netherlands	8,7	4,3	Turkey	11,8	9,9	Canada	6,7	4,2
Luxembourg	8,6	4,5	Luxembourg	11,6	9,8	Austria	6,4	2,4
Switzerland	8,0	3,5	Portugal	11,2	10,1	Estonia	5,8	3,0
Latvia	8,0	9,0	Germany	10,4	10,1	OECD total (34)	5,5	4,0
Slovenia	7,9	6,5	Slovenia	10,2	12,2	Netherlands	5,3	2,6
OECD total (35)	7,9	6,0	Canada	9,8	13,6	Luxembourg	5,3	2,1
Slovak Republic	7,7	8,2	Switzerland	9,7	7,1	Iceland	5,2	2,0
Lithuania	7,6	7,3	Australia	9,4	8,3	Germany	5,2	1,7
Canada	6,9	6,2	Czech Republic	8,8	13,7	Korea	4,6	3,9
Germany	6,9	3,6	United Kingdom	8,2	7,6	Slovenia	4,3	5,1
Estonia	6,4	5,9	Hungary	7,4	11,3	United Kingdom	4,0	2,5
Australia	5,9	5,6	Malta	7,0	8,3	Australia	3,8	2,8
Chile	5,8	7,9	New Zealand	6,1	8,2	New Zealand	3,7	1,8
Malta	5,6	5,1	Mexico	6,0	3,0	Lithuania	3,6	2,9
Iceland	5,5	3,4	Estonia	6,0	11,7	Chile	3,6	5,6
New Zealand	5,4	5,5	Iceland	5,6	5,7	Slovak Republic	3,4	4,2
Japan	5,4	4,4	Chile	5,5	7,6	Israel	3,4	3,1
United Kingdom	5,2	4,4	United States	5,4	13,8	United States	3,3	2,7
Mexico	4,2	3,6	Israel	4,1	7,9	Czech Republic	3,3	1,4
United States	4,2	4,9	Korea	2,7	2,7	Latvia	3,0	4,1
Korea	3,9	3,8				Malta	2,6	1,5
Israel	3,7	4,5	South Africa	22,1	38,3	Bulgaria	2,2	3,8
Bulgaria	3,6	8,5	Russia	14,9	21,5	Mexico	2,1	4,4
Hungary	3,4	4,2	Costa Rica	14,0	14,8	Hungary	0,9	1,7
Czech Republic	3,0	2,9	Indonesia	11,8	10,4			
			Brazil	6,8	13,7	Costa Rica	7,9	5,8
South Africa	17,7	30,8	Colombia	5,9	6,4	South Africa	5,9	6,0
Costa Rica	12,7	11,7	Argentina	4,7	6,6	Russia	4,8	4,3
Indonesia	10,4	11,0				Argentina	4,6	2,8
Russia	7,8	8,9				Indonesia	4,3	5,6
Colombia	4,9	6,6				Colombia	3,0	4,4
Brazil	4,8	11,1				Brazil	2,7	3,7
Argentina	4,8	6,2						
Saudi Arabia	0,6	11,9						

Table 4: Unemployment rates for migrants, 2017 (ages 15-64) in relation to their educational level. The first column presents the general percentage, the second column presents the rates of low education unemployed migrants and the third one presents the higher education unemployed ones. It is obvious that Greece has the highest unemployment rates for migrants of all educational levels (Source: OECD, 2018).

The gap concerning the job opportunities between the indigenous population of the EU and the citizens from third countries is proven through more recent data provided by Eurostat (2020). The employment percentage for outside EU citizens was 13.8% lower than the one for EU citizens in 2019 from 13% in 2014. 73.8% of the European citizens employed in 2019 is compared to 60.0% from third country citizens.

As mentioned in the National Reform Programme⁶⁵ (2020), the strategic directions of OAED for the period 2020-24, gives priority to vulnerable groups which are more remote from the job market. Among the action fields for the next years, there is also the Employment Integration of Refugees.

B.2.6. Gender Equality (SDG 5)

Gender equality and women and girl empowerment (SDG 5) consist one of the main priorities for Greece, according to the Voluntary Review, 2018,⁶⁶ for the UN. However, according to OECD data for 2019, Greece has a lot to do on the gender equality issue. For instance, the indicator for gender equality issues covered by legislature (a percentage of equality issues covered by law on a total of 45 equality issues) is 40% in Greece, as opposed to 66.6% in OECD (min 40% Greece, max 90% Switzerland),⁶⁷ thus having one of the lowest scores as far as the sustainable development goals are concerned.

To achieve gender equality, the former Secretariat General on Gender Equality at the Ministry of the Interior⁶⁸ drew the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2016-2020 (ES-DIF),⁶⁹ while at present, the Secretariat General for Family Policies & Gender Equality is implementing 3 projects: PEGASUS (to address the gender pension gap in Greece), Gender Public Debate (on the stereotypes reproduced by the Mass Media around genders) and SHARE (to balance work and family life in businesses). Furthermore, within 2020, the SGGE is incorporating the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for the next period (2020-2024).⁷⁰

According to ELSTAT data, in 2018, women faced the danger of poverty or social seclusion by 2 per cent more compared to men (32.6% and 30.9%). For 2019, according to ELSTAT data from a Survey on Work Force, the percentage of employment (aged 20 to 64) in men,

65 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April, 2020) page 22 oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf

66 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 48. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf

67 SEV (October, 2019), Newsletter on the Greek economy: "Sustainable development for a powerful economy!" page 11. www.sev.org.gr/Uploads/Documents/EconBulletin_24_10_2019_V4.pdf

68 Now it is under the Ministry of Employment and Social Security as Secretariat General for Family Policies and Gender Equality.

69 Secretariat General on Gender Equality (February, 2017), National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2016-2020. <http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ESDIF.pdf>

70 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April, 2020) page 71. oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf

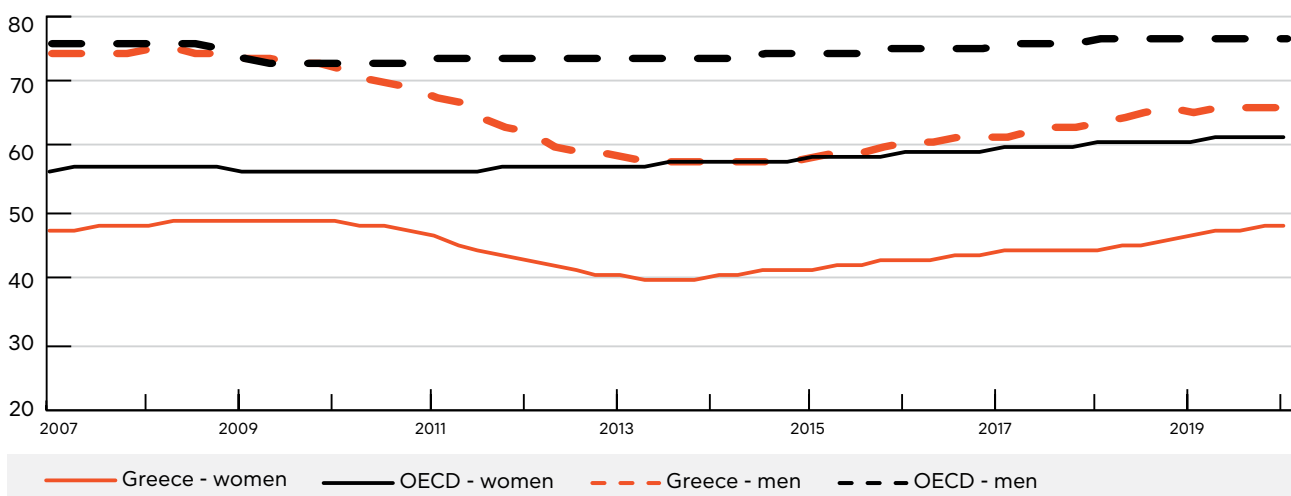


was 71.3% from 70.1% in 2018, and in women, 51.3% (from 49.1% in 2018), registering a significant discrepancy between the two sexes and achieving the national target of 70% only in men (according to the goals set by Strategic “Europe 2020”).⁷¹

As recorded in the OECD Financial Report⁷² for Greece (2020), women continue suffering very low percentages of employment, much lower than the average of the OECD countries and also than the average employment rates for men both in Greece and the rest of the OECD countries in general.

Figure ES.2. Employment rates are low, especially for women.

Employment rates, % of working age population, s.a.



Graph 4: “Employment percentages are low, especially for women” (Source: OECD, 2020)

In the Voluntary Review, 2018⁷³ for the UN, among the strategic targets on the course of the country towards sustainable development there are: social inclusion and equal treatment for women who are faced with multiple discriminations, measures against violence towards women in the family, the work place and the society, support for women so that they participate in the job market, the promotion of equal opportunities in education, the mass media, culture and sports, the eradication of gender inequalities in health and equal treatment for women in decision making posts. Emphasis is placed on the protection of women who belong to vulnerable groups, and particularly to female migrants and refugees.

71 Hellenic Republic, National Reform Programme (April, 2020) page 58. oe-e.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-greece_el.pdf

72 OECD Economic Surveys, Greece (July 2020). www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Greece-2020-OECD-economic-survey-Overview.pdf

73 Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (July, 2018), General Secretariat of the Government Office of Coordination, Institutional, International & European Affairs, page 48. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf



Especially for female migrants, their social and financial integration coincided for a long period with the financial crisis that struck the country. So, since 2017, SGGE marked the high unemployment rates that female migrants are faced with, since the job market in the field of babysitting and caring for the elderly, which was their main source of income, is substantially reduced. Therefore, female migrants are rendered a kind of “sub-proletariat”.⁷⁴

The data provided by OECD⁷⁵ show the greater difficulty female migrants face not only as women but also as a non-indigenous population. The employment rates for the two sexes, aged 14-64, are as follows: For the non-indigenous men, 64.9%, while for the indigenous ones it's 62.6%, and for the non-indigenous women it's 42.5% while for the indigenous ones it's 44.6%.

It is interesting to note an element that there is a certain prejudice in relation to the integration of women in the job market, prevalent not only among female migrants but also among the indigenous population, with high rates in both sexes. For instance, OECD⁷⁶ (2018) examines the attitudes regarding the following statement:

“When there are few posts of work, men are entitled to a job more than women are”.

From the evidence, it follows that in Greece more than half the foreign population (62% for men, 45% for women) in comparison to 44% of the indigenous population (52% men, 37% women) agree with the above statement.

The experience of gender-based discrimination

In Greece, almost one out of four male migrants feels they are discriminated against, while in other traditional destinations (France, Belgium, The Netherlands) the equivalent is one out of five. However, it seems that the feeling of discrimination is intensified in relation to the gender: 31% of foreign women mention discrimination incidents, compared to the equivalent of 24% of men.⁷⁷

74 Secretariat General on Gender Equality (February, 2017), National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2016-2020, page. 20

75 OECD/European Union (2018) “Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration”, page 155. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

76 OECD/European Union (2018) “Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration”, page 132. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4

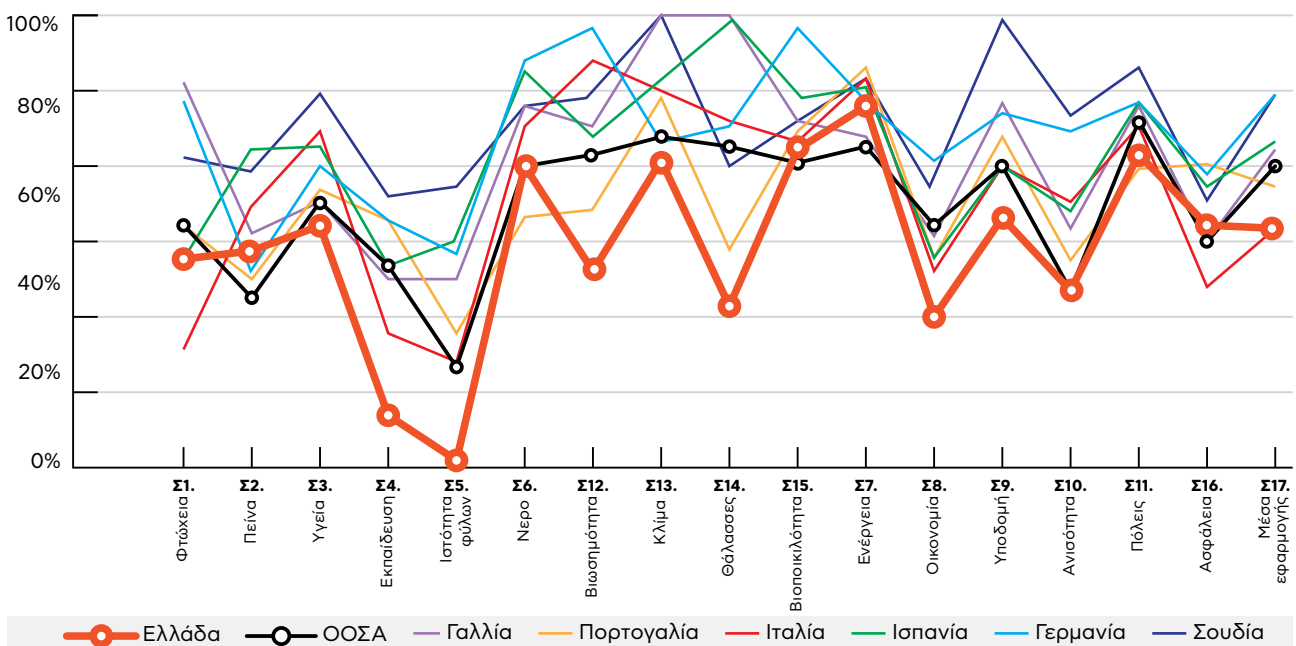
77 OECD/European Union (2018) “Settling in 2018 - Indicators of immigrant integration”, page 169. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264307216-en.pdf?expires=1599397148&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F4105E4E222DECBB84C5391C33466E4



C. Conclusions for the future of sustainable development in Greece in connection to immigration

The Association of Businesses & Industries (SEV),⁷⁸ back in October 2019, in a newsletter they issued about the Greek economy, drew attention to the delay Greece has shown in implementing the goals for sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda. To be more specific, Greece, regarding indicators set by OECD in order to assess progress in relation to sustainable development and the gap between countries, ranked fourth place from the bottom among 35 countries, while the OECD countries on average had achieved 58% of the 17 goals in the process of time, and Greece was at 49%.

Greece has achieved the lowest score on the gender equality and education issue, while in sectors such as poverty and health, it is slightly below the average of the OECD countries. On the contrary, it had done more than the average OECD country in the field of hunger. The evidence is depicted in the following table:



Graph 5: The progress for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Greece, OECD and selected countries (Source: SEV, 2019).

According to SEV, good scores in the course for the implementation of the sustainable development goals are indissolubly linked with good scores in economy. However, this is rather complicated for Greece that, as already mentioned, has recently overcome a long-term recession. The paradox with Greece is that the total score for the country towards the SDGs (49%) is much higher in comparison to its score in Goal 8 (33%), which is the economy. With 49% on sustainable development as a whole, the score for Goal 8 should be 45% and not 33%, as it is registered. Apparently, the available data have been affected by the crisis and the recession that struck Greece in the last decade. In conclusion, SEV under-

78 SEV, newsletter on the Greek economy: "Sustainable development for a strong economy!" 9 October, 2019, pages 1-2 www.sev.org.gr/Uploads/Documents/EconBulletin_24_10_2019_V4.pdf



lines that actions funded with loans are in danger of bringing temporary results in the indicators which will be fickle. It estimates that achieving the sustainable development goals is rendered hard until 2030 “as there is lack of strong financial basis”.

The issue of relating economic growth and investments with the achievement of the sustainable development goals was pinpointed by OECD⁷⁹ in a newsletter about the “Economic Research on Greece”. As mentioned then (2016) in the report: “Strengthening economic growth and investment in order to create jobs, the improvement of stability in the public finances and the provision of an effective social safety network is critical so that Greece rebounds from the tremendous social impact of the financial crisis”.

The diminished job market and the disintegration of the social structures and provisions for the whole population of the country has repercussions on all social groups, but this does not mean that certain people have not found themselves exposed to austerity. A lot of young people were forced to immigrate, while those who are left in the country frequently face insecurity and further financial hardships. For the migrants and refugees in the country, the life-long inefficiencies in the integrating policies combined with the financial recession render equal participation difficult both in social and economic life, and weakens further the dynamics of contribution in the effort for sustainable development. It looks like the motto “no one should be left behind” will be difficult to implement in Greece.

Unfortunately, the pandemic intercepted the efforts to implement the SDGs, as noted by OECD⁸⁰ in the report “Economic Survey of Greece”, July, 2020. More specifically, the pandemic threatens to stop abruptly the rebound of the Greek economy, which was showing a 2% growth rate. Moreover, it is assessed that the pandemic crisis threatens to deteriorate the long-term challenges Greece faces in the job market. While employment rates have improved recently, they are still among the lowest in the OECD countries, wages are low, which creates ominous perspectives for the social integration of migrants and refugees, as well as the overall sustainability development of the economy and the harmonious coexistence of the social groups.

79 OECD, “Combating poverty and inequality in Greece is of vital importance for rebounding after the crisis” www.oecd.org/newsroom/greek-tackling-poverty-and-inequality-in-greece-is-crucial-to-recovery-from-crisis.htm

80 ΟΟΣΑ (2020), “Economic Survey of Greece 2020” www.oecd.org/economy/greece-economic-snapshot






POLICY PROPOSALS

Based on the above conclusions, it is important to:

- Monitor the procedure the Greek government follows in order to develop a national strategy for the SDGs, where certain actions to achieve each goal will be presented.
- Ensure that the civil society, the academia and the private sector are represented in the consultation procedures about the SDGs.
- Frequently write and publish the National Voluntary Reviews about the course of the SDGs so that there is potential to follow the actions taking place to achieve the SDGs and the contribution in the international debate and exchange of good practices.
- Adopt integration policies that will focus on equal access for migrants and refugees in health, education and the job market.
- Adopt early integration policies with measures which will ensure that the refugee and immigrant populations will not be deprived of their social rights until the legal procedures they follow will be fulfilled.
- Incorporate human rights based approach in planning the migration policies of the country, putting emphasis on the protection of the mobile populations so that the procedures they have to follow are carried out uneventfully.
- Develop a national action plan and strategy for eliminating racism and other forms of violence
- Provide educational opportunities to enhance skills and obtain knowledge that will facilitate access to the job market for all.
- Enhance the employment projects to ensure direct access to the job market.
- Increase employment and financial independence for women and address the phenomenon of female poverty.
- Support motherhood and childcare, but also single-parent families within the measures taken to reconcile the professional with family life (collaboration with the authorities and employers through adopting family friendly practices at work places, like alternate time-tables, avoid overtime etc.), improve legislation on maternity leave and the upbringing issue, and, generally, protect motherhood).
- Develop encouragement motives to use parental leave on behalf of men.
- Increase the number of posts at nurseries and kindergartens.
- Campaign for equal distribution of household responsibilities and eradicate stereotypes about the role of men and women in the house and the family.



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