Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Athens

OECD

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Please cite this publication as:
OECD (2018), *Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Athens*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304116-en

ISBN 978-92-64-30410-9 (print)
ISBN 978-92-64-30411-6 (PDF)

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Foreword

An OECD-EU Initiative: "Territorial Approach to Migrant Integration: The Role of Local Authorities"

This publication on "Working together for local integration of migrant and refugees in Athens" was produced by the OECD as part of a larger study on "Territorial approach to migrant integration: The role of local authorities" supported by the European Commission.

This study takes stock of the existing multi-level governance frameworks and policies for migrant and refugee integration at the local level in nine large European cities: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Paris, Rome and Vienna and a small city in Germany (Altena) thanks to the support of the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. It also builds on information collected from other 61 European cities, through an ad-hoc survey and on a statistical database on migrant outcomes at regional (TL2) level. This study resulted in the publication of the document entitled "Working together for local integration of refugees and migrants", which was approved by the OECD Committee for regional development policy (RDPC) in December 2017, published in 2018 (OECD, 2018).

The focus of this study is on ''migrant integration'', meaning a wide range of different groups of people with different reasons for leaving their countries of origin: humanitarian, economic, family or study, among others. As specified in the definition below, the target group includes newcomers as well as migrants who settled in the cities many years ago and native-born people with at least one migrant parent, depending on the statistical definition used by the city/country. Given the recent increase in the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers to Europe, particular attention is paid to these groups throughout the case studies.

Cities in the sample have different track records in integrating migrants. The study looks at updates to the governance mechanisms in the wake of the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees, in order to improve the local reception of migrants and the capacity to integrate them into the society. Conversely, it also investigates opportunities to extend some of the services recently established for newcomers to long-standing migrant groups.

The point of departure for the overall study is the observation that in practice integration takes place at the local level and should benefit to both migrant and hosting communities through appropriate local development strategies. Cities are focal spots of refugees and migrants reception and integration processes: in 2015, close to two-thirds of the foreign-born population in the OECD lived in urban areas (OECD, 2018). However it seems that asylum seekers, at least in Europe, are more equally spread across regions. This new situation required responses from previously uninvolved cities and regions. In particular, in smaller size cities and non-urban regions. Following, the question of linking migrant

integration policies with regional development polices emerged for sub national governments.

The ambition of this series of case studies is to identify how cities have responded to these objectives. It aims to address an information vacuum: beyond the dominant literature on international and national evidence about migrant movements and integration, several studies exist about the local dimension and impact of migration without converging towards general results.[1] In addition, they just partially explore the governance factor attached to it. In the view of partner cities and international organisations (UNHCR, etc.), multi-level governance can be an important explanatory factor of the performance of migrant integration policies. Even though migration policies are the responsibility of the national government, the concentration of migrants in cities, and particularly in metropolitan areas (Boulant, J., M. Brezzi and P. Veneri, 2016; Diaz Ramirez, Liebig, Thoreau and Veneri, 2018), has an impact on the local demand for work, housing, goods and services that local authorities have to manage. Local authorities act within a multi-level budgetary and administrative framework, which limits or adds responsibilities in dealing with migrant-specific impacts in their territory. As such, this work first aims at understanding the way cities and their partners address migrant integration issues. While it does not strive at this stage to evaluate the impact of the whole set of local public actions, it compiles qualitative evidence of city policies across selected multi-level governance dimensions. These dimensions were based on the multi-level governance gaps analysis developed by the OECD (Charbit, 2011; Charbit and Michalun, 2009). Statistical data, if available, have been collected from all of the cities on the presence and outcomes of migrant and refugee populations.

As a result of this comparative work, and in collaboration with the partner cities and organisations, the OECD compiled a list of key objectives to guide policy makers integrating migrants with a multi-governance perspective. The OECD Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level is articulated according to 4 blocks and 12 objectives. The four blocks cover: 1) institutional and financial settings; 2) time and space as keys for migrants and host communities to live together; 3) enabling conditions for policy formulation and implementation; and 4) sectoral policies related to integration: access to the labour market, housing, social welfare and health, and education (see Box 2.1).

This study first provides insight on the Athens migration background and current situation. It then gives a description of the actions implemented following the framework of the OECD Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level.

The objective is to allow cities to learn from each other and to provide national and supranational decision makers and key partners of local integration policies with better evidence to address the major challenges ahead in this field and to adopt appropriate incentive schemes.

Note

[1] Refer to the bibliography of the synthesis report.

Acknowledgements

This publication on Working Together For Local Integration Of Migrants And Refugees In Athens was produced by the OECD in partnership with the European Commission as part of a larger study on "Territorial approach to migrant integration: The role of local authorities".

This case study has been written by Anna Piccinni (OECD/CFE) with inputs from Dr Rosa Vasilaki (external consultant) and Lisanne Raderschall (OECD/CFE) under the supervision of Claire Charbit, Head of the Territorial Dialogue and Migration Unit, within the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism of the OECD.

The case study has been realised thanks to the close collaboration of the Municipality of Athens who provided the information and organised the OECD field work. The Secretariat would like to express its gratitude to all the participants to the interviews (see Annex A). In particular to Antigone Kotanidis, Advisor to the Mayor of Athens on international affairs and migration policy and other public officials of the municipality for their continuous support throughout the realisation of the case study. The secretariat is particularly grateful also to the Deputy Mayor of Athens, Lefteris Papagiannakis for his engagement in this project. We would like to also thank the national authorities for their inputs and in particular Angeliki Grammatikopoulou, Migration Policy Directorate of the Ministry of Migration Policy, National Delegate at the OECD Working Party on Migration.

This case study benefitted from the comments of other colleagues across OECD directorates. In particular, Thomas Liebig and Eva Degler, International Migration Division of the Directorate for Employment, Labor and Social Affairs.

The Secretariat is especially thankful for the financial contribution and the collaboration throughout the implementation of the project to the European Union Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. In particular, we would like to thank Andor Urmos and Louise Bonneau for their guidance as well as for their substantive inputs during the revision of the case study.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AMIF	European Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
ACCMR	Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee Issues
ADDMA	Athens Development and Destination Management
AP	Athens Partnership
EIE	European Fund for the Integration of non-EU Immigrants
ESF	European Social Found
ESTIA	Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation
KEDE	Union of municipalities
MIC	Migrant Integration Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
SNF	Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Executive summary

Athens' approach to migrant and refugee integration is largely affected by two aspects. First, Greece has been facing, since 2008, a dire economic situation that has triggered high unemployment and public budget cuts. Second, between 2015 and 2016 Greece received unprecedented inflows of asylum seekers and refugees adding pressure on the public service delivery in a number of sectors that deal with reception and integration. The number of refugees and asylum seekers in Athens was estimated in 2017 at 18 000 people. Under these circumstances, the city developed an integrated refugee reception system in cooperation with national and international partners (donors, foundations, NGOs and civil society) in order to ensure basic service provision.

Despite the focus on recent challenges, Greece had experienced immigration well before 2015. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, many migrants came from the Balkans, the ex-Soviet Union and Central Europe; and since 2008, inflows from Asia, Africa and the Middle East increased due to its location on southern European border. According to the latest census in 2011, the Municipality of Athens has a population of 664 046 people, of which some 23% are foreign nationals. In 2016, the city counted 77 806 migrants with residence permits. The largest groups of nationalities are Albanians (38 469), followed in much smaller numbers from the Philippines, Bangladesh and Ukraine. The economic crisis made the situations of some migrant groups (in particular Albanians) more precarious and questioned their long-term residence in the country. As a result, while numerous new asylum seekers and refugees arrived in Athens in 2015-16, many long-standing migrants left the city.

Yet the unprecedented flow since 2015 changed the responses to reception and integration by public authorities at all levels. At the national level one of the consequences of the increased migration inflow has been the formulation of a new National Integration Strategy by the Ministry for Migration Policy that is now (June 2018) under consultation. The new National Integration Strategy foresees the co-operation and involvement of all policy levels (central, regional and local) and actors (national authorities, local authorities, organisations, NGOs, public and private sector), while it highlights the role of local authorities, which have a crucial role to play in diversity management and migrant integration. At local level the increase in new arrivals deepened the relation between the municipality and non-state actors establishing a much more active interaction in formulating, funding, implementing and evaluating reception and integration policies in the city.

Overall, Athens' approach to migrant and refugee integration aims at ensuring equal access to social services for all people in the city. Within the highly-centralised governance system municipalities have limited competences in sectors related to migrant integration. Nevertheless the city of Athens decided to act to ensure better reception and integration by complementing national government policies. In this context, the municipality is very active providing a set of initiatives that contribute to socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees as well as of other vulnerable host groups, including

through reinforced local coordination. However, their sustainability is not guaranteed and they could gain in efficiency through more coordinated action with other levels of government and stable funding.

The main aim of this case study is to reflect on and analyse how the city of Athens organises and implements the integration and reception of migrants and refugees within its own institutional framework as well as in interaction with other stakeholders, including across levels of government.

Key Findings

These key findings are presented according to the OECD Checklist for Public Action to Migrant Integration at the Local Level and summarise some of the remaining challenges, what is being done and room for improvement. It also identifies best practices that could be replicated in other cities.

Some of the remaining challenges

'In-transit' country status

Lack of employment opportunities is one of the factors that make integration even more challenging in Athens than in other contexts and contribute to the desire of many refugees and migrants to continue their journey towards other more prosperous EU countries. This significantly impacts refugees' effort to integrate, to learn the language and their commitment to sending their children to school. Hence, it is crucial for the country as well as the municipality to communicate that it is important, while being in Greece, to seize education and language opportunities as an investment for the future regardless of the final destination country. This holds true especially as more refugees and asylum seekers are likely to stay in the country after the so called "Balkan Route" was closed.

Multi-level governance

Greece has a highly-centralised system in comparison to other OECD countries, with only 7.1% of public expenditure spent at sub-national level, against an OECD average of 40.4%. This limits municipalities' ability to play a decisive role in migrant integration. However, the 2010 decentralisation reform called 'Kallikratis' shifted competences from provinces to municipalities in the sphere of social policy. The new responsibilities were related to day care for children, the protection of elderly people, support for families and vulnerable groups, the implementation of public health programmes, and the tackling of social exclusion and marginalisation of the poor, migrants, and the uninsured. Still, no specific additional budget was attributed to these competences limiting the capacity to implement them, and resulting in sporadic migrant integration programmes. The new National Integration Strategy is expected to provide a coherent approach across levels of government through coordination of services, initiatives and projects on migrant-related issues.

Financial constraints and dependency on donors

Budget cuts due to the economic crisis and austerity measures, lack of allocation of extra funds for the management of the refugee crisis and the lack of competence to apply EU funds directly have created a particularly restrictive financial framework for the city approach to migrant integration. Consequently, non-state funding is a key source of financing often lacking sustainability due to short-term funding cycles.

Unemployment and sagging labour market discourages refugees from staying in Greece

The high rates of unemployment in Greece and the poor state of the labour market makes it very challenging to implement policies facilitating migrants' integration into the job market; thus, integrating migrants into the job market is even more challenging in Athens than in other countries and cities. In November 2017, 20% of the overall Greek population was unemployed. In Athens, numbers were even higher at a staggering 51%. In the region of Attica (whose capital is Athens), the income gap between native-born and migrant populations (69%) is the second highest in all OECD regions. The gap in employment opportunities is a major concern for the city and all residents and constitutes one of the reasons why many refugees do not wish to stay in the city. Employment policies are a central competence in Greece. Both recognized refugees and asylum seekers are allowed to work since the moment they apply for international protection and receive the relevant Applicant's Card, however there are limited mechanisms in place to facilitate their entry in the labour market such as skills assessment and validation mechanisms. At the city level, the municipal agency ADDMA (Athens Development and Destination Management) implements programmes supporting employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups including migrants. Many of these projects involve migrant associations.

What is already being done and how it could be improved

Housing and Social Segregation

Athens is among the cities in the sample that considered segregation as a very high, or highly unfavourable factor to integration. In the past twenty years, there has been an increasing move from the city centre to the suburbs, triggering devaluation in some parts of the city centre. Many migrants and vulnerable groups occupied uninhabited buildings. The municipality doesn't have an extensive social housing system and is currently looking at mechanisms to map uninhabited buildings and use them for social purposes. This approach has been applied to find housing solutions for refugees (see description below), showing the city's willingness to experiment and find innovative solutions to cope with rocketing refugee arrivals and growing housing needs. ADDMA liaises with private landlords regarding uninhabited units scattered throughout the city, thus preventing newcomers from concentrating in most exposed areas of the city; Such schemes merit to be closely monitored to assess their sustainability and could potentially be scaled up in order to address the needs of other vulnerable groups.

Athens Coordination Centre for Refugees and Migrants (ACCMR): a strategic platform to formulate a bottom-up Local Integration Strategy

Benefitting from external funding, the city was able to establish the Athens Coordination Centre for Refugees and Migrants as a coordination platform between various stakeholders active in the provision of services in Athens and the city. The Centre structures its work in five committees, that each serves a specific sector dealing with migrant and refugee integration (housing, employment, health, education and legal support). Through these committees the municipality formulated a Strategic Action Plan for the Integration of Migrant and Refugees, approved by the Mayor in April 2018 and designed new municipal activities. All actions, while being led by the city's Deputy Mayor for Migrants and Refugees, are built on funding availability and engagement of partners from other levels of government as well as international and national NGOs and

foundations. This is an important constraint in devising a local integration strategy, yet ensures that important stakeholders are continuously included in the process. In practice, while the actions were clearly developed with the aim to facilitate refugee integration, they also concern other categories of migrants as well as vulnerable members of the host community.

The ACCMR also plays a key role in coordinating with other eight Greek municipalities (see Objective 1) with whom Athens works to transfer capacity including the set up of evaluation systems.

Capacity Building

While still in need of capacity building, different projects aim at increasing the diversity and development of the skills of the municipality's staff to plan and implement integration actions. For instance, the Open Society Fellowship offers the opportunity to a migrant or refugee to work directly with the municipality on projects and programmes related to the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the cities. Still, language remains a significant barrier as many migrants cannot make use of the opportunities, initiatives or programmes offered because of their limited knowledge of Greek. Limited familiarity with how to complete the required administrative procedures as well as limited knowledge of the different initiatives is also a common reason why migrants underuse the municipal services. Further, there is no systematic language training in place at all levels that could help address the language barrier from the migrant side. The appointment and increased use of cultural mediators or interpreters could be a significant contribution to address the issue.

Cooperation with non-state actors

Non-state actors, including foundations, play an essential role in delivering services to migrants and refugees in Athens. As opposed to other cities, some of the municipal services and employees working, at least partly, on migrant- and refugee-related issues – are funded by non-state actors. Since 2015, the Athens Partnership (AP) was launched in order to streamline private contributions to migrant and non-migrant related services in the city, with lead support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Another example of coordination is the previously-mentioned ACCMR. From the evidence collected it seems that the representation of refugee and migrant associations among the stakeholders participating to the Committees could be increased. While the services provided by this coordination structure are essential to meet refugee needs, it is important that the city doesn't create parallel structures to universal public services. It should also strive to transfer tasks to the city when possible, in order to avoid creating long-term dependency on donors.

Evaluation

The Municipality of Athens launched the Athens Observatory for Refugees and Migrants (AORI) in October 2016. Its mission is to monitor refugee and migrant flows and to produce data on their characteristics and integration outcomes. This initiative contributes towards filling an important data gap and shedding light on the living conditions of many migrants. After this first profiling survey, the Observatory is working on a systematised survey to collect information about refugee integration outcomes. To do so, it works in close collaboration with the National Statistic Authority. This work needs to be supported and extended to the entire migrant population, not only refugees, to better identify their obstacles in accessing services and opportunities.

Best practices that could be replicated

Steering of refugee- and migration-related issues comes from the highest levels of city hall

A political milestone with regard to migrant and refugee integration was the appointment of a Vice Mayor for Migrants and Refugees in 2016 and the establishment of a Department for Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees within the city administration.

Integrated Accommodation scheme for Asylum Seekers and Refugees - The triplet scheme

Asylum-seeker and refugee families hosted in apartments rented by the City of Athens (Athens Development Agency - ADDMA) within the framework of the UNHCR ECHO-funded programme are supported by a triplet – a social worker, an apartment manager and an interpreter. The triplets ensure a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of the families who spend from three to six months in the accommodation (as described above). They also constitute a point of reference for the neighbours to facilitate contacts with refugee families and reassure their potential concerns.

Migrant Participation

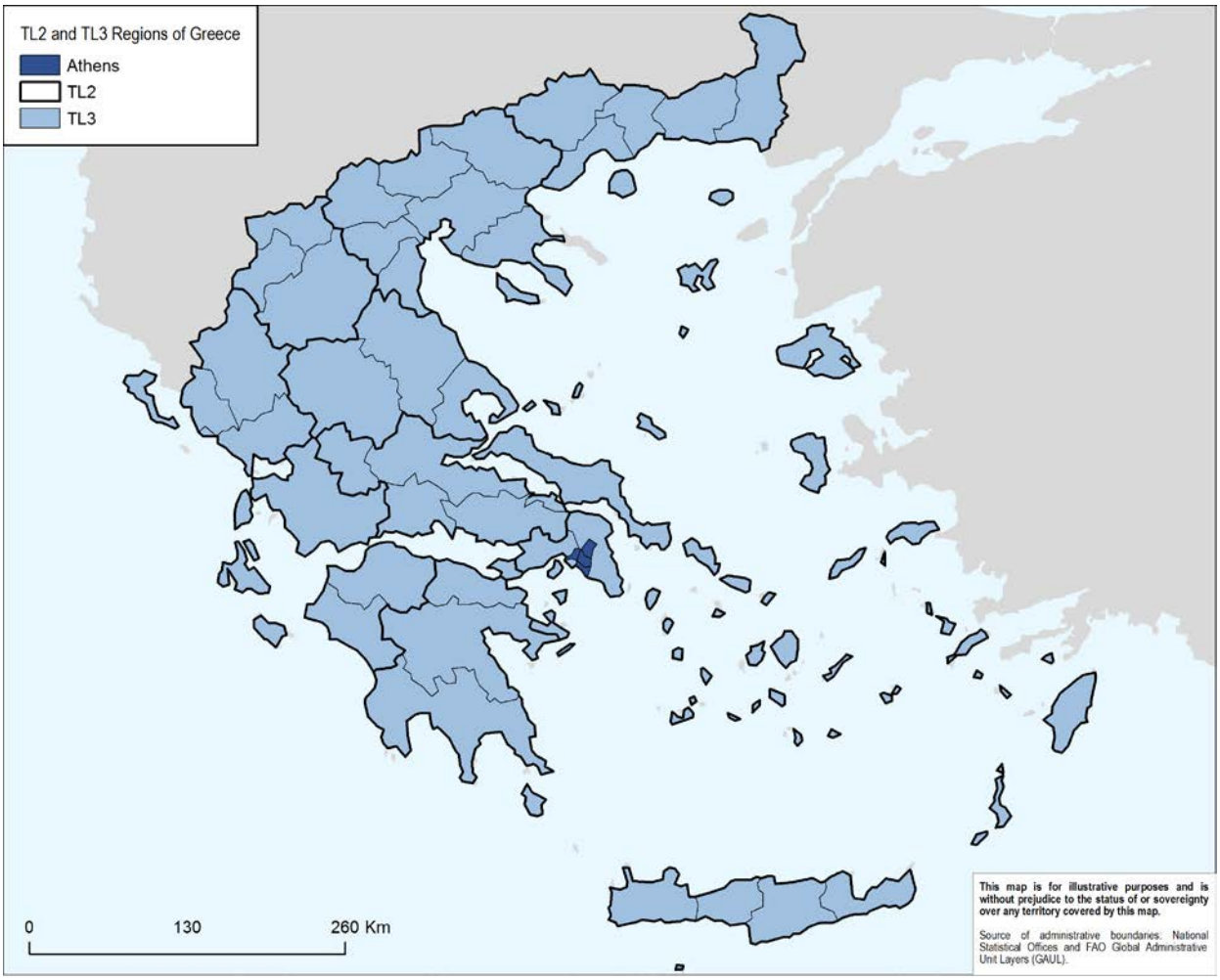
Since 2011, Athens established a *Migrant Integration Council*. This consultative mechanism, involving the municipality and six migrant communities, is an interface to inform the municipal council about migrants' needs and to formulate recommendations and proposals that specifically affect this group.

Also, in the generalised context of limited public service availability, migrant associations provide public services directly (e.g. child care, language classes, etc.). For instance, migrant doctors provide specialised health services for migrant workers and refugees. Further, a network of migrant women (Melissa) was the first to mobilise to address the needs of female refugees and organise activities for their empowerment and education.

Further, migrant associations such as Generation 2.0, composed of second generation migrants, advocate for increased visibility and to play a more active role in the city's public life.

Key data on migrant presence and integration in Athens

Figure 1. Athens's geographic location in Greece according to the OECD regional classification



Note: TL2 - Territorial Level 2 consists of the OECD classification of regions within each member country. There are 335 regions classified at this level across 35 member countries. The TL2 region of Attica surrounds the city of Athens. TL3-Territorial Level 3 consists of the lower level of classification and is composed of 1 681 small regions. In most cases, they correspond to administrative regions.
Source: OECD, *OECD Regional Statistics* (database), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en.

This section presents key definitions and a selection of indicators about migrants' presence and results in Athens.

i) Definition of migrant and refugee

The term "migrant" generally functions as an umbrella term used to describe people that move to another country with the intention of staying for a significant period of time. According to the United Nations (UN), a long-term migrant is "a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months)" (UNSD, 2017). Yet, not all migrants move for the same reasons, have the same needs or are subject to the same laws. Hence a terminological distinction is necessary.

This report considers migrants as a large group that includes:

- Those who have emigrated to an EU country from another EU country ('EU migrants'),
- Those who have come to an EU country from a non-EU country ('non-EU born or third-country national'),
- Native-born children of immigrants (often referred to as the 'second generation'), and
- Persons who have fled their country of origin and are seeking international protection.

For the latter, some distinctions are needed. While asylum seekers and refugees are often counted as a subset of migrants and included in official estimates of migrant populations and flows, this is not correct according to the UN's definition that indicates that "migrant" does not refer to refugees, displaced, or others forced or compelled to leave their homes.

> *"The term 'migrant' in Article 1.1 (a) should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without the intervention of an external compelling factor" (IOM Constitution Article 1.1 (a)).*

According to recent OECD work, the term "migrant" is a generic term for anyone moving to another country with the intention of staying for a certain period of time – not, in other words, tourists or business visitors. It includes both permanent and temporary migrants with a valid residence permit or visa, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants who do not belong to any of the three groups (OECD, 2016b).

Thus, in this report the following terms are used:

- "Status holder" or "refugee" who have successfully applied for asylum and have been granted protection in their host country, including those who are recognised on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but also those benefiting from national asylum laws or EU legislation (Directive 2011/95/EU), such as the subsidiary protection status. This corresponds to the category 'humanitarian migrants' meaning recipients of protection – be it refugee status, subsidiarity or temporary protection – as used in recent OECD work (OECD, 2016b).
- 'Asylum seeker' for those who have submitted a claim for international protection but are awaiting the final decision.
- 'Rejected asylum seeker' for those who have been denied protection status.

- ‘Undocumented migrants’ are people who do not qualify for a residence permit, including those who do not apply for asylum, do not appeal the decision on their asylum seeker status.

This report systematically distinguishes which group is targeted by policies and services put in place by the city. Where statistics provided by the cities included refugees in the migrant populations and flows, it will be indicated accordingly.

National indicators are generally used for the purposes of this case study, the following definitions are used:

- -Migrants in the context of a census refer to the people who are foreign nationals, regardless of their status in Greece. These may include EU citizens, although the vast majority are non-EU nationals. It also includes undocumented migrants.
- - Holders of a residence permit are non-EU nationals who have a valid legal residency status, which means that they work legally in Greece depending on the conditions of their residence permit (i.e. allowing or not access to employment). Therefore, people counted as migrants in the census and the number of non-EU nationals holding a residence permit don’t coincide.
- -Asylum seekers are people who have arrived in Greece and have applied for asylum
- -Refugees are people who have been granted international protection in Greece (i.e. refugee status or subsidiary protection).

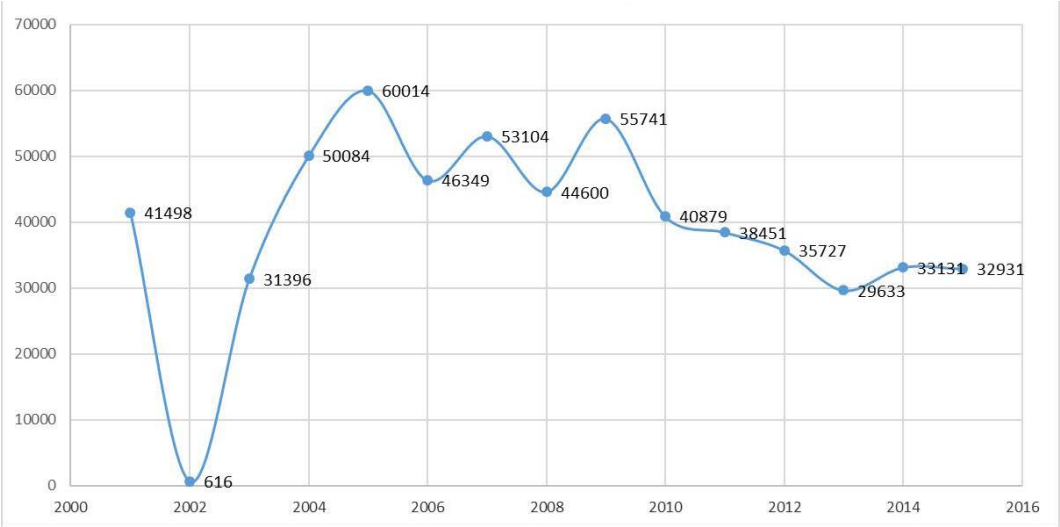
ii) Key statistics

Population

All the below statistics refer to **2016** (unless stated differently). Numbers and percentages were provided by the city of Athens unless stated otherwise.

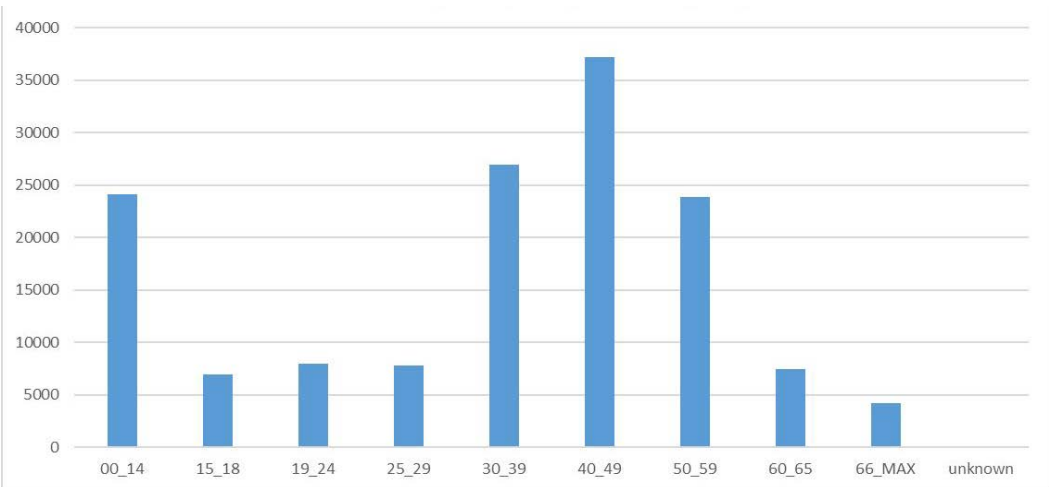
- City composition - # of **districts: 7**
- Total **city population**: **664 046 (2011)**
- % of population with foreign nationality background[1]: **23%, 155 000 people (2011 census)**
- **In 2016,** 77 806 migrants had a residence permit

Figure 2. Number of residence permits issued to migrants of the Municipality of Athens and their fluctuation over time, 2001-2016



Source: Data obtained from Athens' Decentralized Administrative Departments [Report on 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece']

Figure 3. Total number of immigrants per age in Athens



Source: Data obtained from the Decentralized Administrative Departments [Report on 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece']

Table 1. Naturalisations since 2011

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
19 222	21 737	30 223	21 829	14 178	31 814

Source: Ministry of Interior of Greece.

Table 2. Number of residence permits issued to third country nationals in the Municipality of Athens, March 2016

Nationality	Total
ALBANIA	38 469
PHILIPPINES	6 083
BANGLADESH	4 383
UKRAINE	4 026
EGYPT	3 549
GEORGIA	3 203
PAKISTAN	3 068
MOLDOVA	2 120
SYRIAN	2 025
CHINA	1 662
NIGERIA	1 194
RUSSIA	1 186
INDIA	792
ETHIOPIA	726
SRI LANKA	499
GHANA	475
ARMENIA	452
MOROCCO	324
IRAN	312
Others	3 258
TOTAL	77 806

Source: Athens Municipality, *Report on 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece'*.

Number of asylum seekers and recognised refugees: currently 15 000 people [Unofficial data provided by Athens municipality]

Employment:

Table 3. Registered Unemployment, March 2017

	> 12 months	< 12 months	Total	Percentage
Greek Nationals	480 490	355 434	835 924	91.04%
EU Nationals	6 070	10 134	16 204	1.76%
Third Country Nationals	19 887	46 166	66 053	7.19%
Total	506 447	411 734	918 181	100.00%

Source: Greek National Agency for Employment and Manpower.

Main industrial sectors where migrants work: Construction, public works, transport (men), cleaning and caring services (women) – before the crisis

Full time employed – Greece: National Population: 49.4% (2004-2014, age 15-64)

Population at risk of poverty Greece:

Migrant population: 64.3% (age: 18-24, 2016 ELSTAT)

National population: 39.4% (age: 18-14 2016, ELSTAT)

Politics:

Right to vote: All foreign nationals who have been granted Greek citizenship have the right to vote and to run for election. EU nationals living in Greece are allowed to vote in local elections under the same conditions as nationals, while non-EU citizens holding a residence permits are not allowed to vote at all.

Education:

Educational Attainment (Primary; Secondary; University):

Migrant population: no data available

National: primary: 33.5%, secondary: 36.6%, university: 21.4% (2011 ELSTAT)

Note

[1] Includes children of migrant parents

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to present the structure and accessibility of existing services, initiatives and projects with regards to migrant integration in the Municipality of Athens. The case study highlights the different levels of government across which integration matters are dealt with and the room for manoeuvre that the municipality has to navigate these issues, in dialogue with local stakeholders (citizens, NGOs, migrant organisations, private sector, unions, etc.). It also identifies existing future difficulties and challenges and assesses possible solutions to those problems, along with highlighting best practices that could possibly be replicated elsewhere. Greece has recently been the theatre of an unprecedented refugee flow (as far as the country's experience is concerned). When examining the Municipality of Athens it is important to take into account contextual factors that constitute the framework within which policies have been developed (or not) and within which proposed policies originating in the European/international experience could be implemented (or not). In the Greek case, four key elements are to be kept in mind: the limited past experience in dealing with migrant integration issues, the 2015-16 peak of refugee arrivals, the economic and social crisis and the centralised nature of the Greek public governance. The convergence of these factors contributed to a context of multi-faceted crisis within which authorities – such as the Municipality of Athens – had to respond swiftly without necessarily having the institutional and/or financial background to do so. Nevertheless, the Municipality stepped in to deal with the recent inflows of refugees and asylum seekers and bolster vulnerable communities (long-standing migrants included).

Chapter 1. Background and governance of migrant integration

Migration insights: flows, presence and nationalities

The landscape of migration in Greece has been formed by three distinct waves since the early 1990s:

1. During the 1990s, the bulk of migrants came from the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union after the collapse of communist regimes in the region.
2. During the last decade, and particularly since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, Greece has become a transit and destination country for migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. However, the reverse trend should also be noted, that is the return of migrants[1] – especially Albanians – to their country of origin due to diminishing economic opportunities (the initial pull factor) in Greece.
3. In 2015-2016, refugee inflows, mainly from Syria, but also from Iraq and Afghanistan, triggered the most significant wave of migration towards Greece, which was seen as a focal transit point to Western Europe (including migrants from Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia).

The largest groups of nationalities among migrants in Athens in 2016 are Albania (38 469), followed in much smaller numbers by nationals from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Ukraine (Table 2). There is no available information on the number of irregular migrants living in the city of Athens. In terms of age, the majority of migrants in Athens are between 25 and 50 years old, while there is a significant age cohort among the younger ages between 0 and 14 years old – children who were either born in Greece – but remain foreign nationals – or who came to the country at a very early age (Figure 3).

An important decline of residence permits issued has been noticed since 2010, which coincides with the onset of the economic crisis (Figure 2). It reflects the fact that a significant number of migrants left the country as employment opportunities evaporated, but it could also be attributed partially to a) the larger numbers of migrants receiving permits of longer duration (five- and ten-year permits), b) the growing number of second generation migrants acquiring Greek nationality, and c) the expanding legalisation of formerly undocumented migrants in recent years based on so-called "exceptional reasons'' (i.e. proof of having developed strong ties with the host country for a specific number of years – as set out by law – even individuals with irregular status). Under Law 4332/2015, the pool of migrants who are eligible for legal status on this basis or on the basis of subsidiary protection was expanded[2]. The Key Statistics Section shows the different categories of reasons for which residence permits were issued to migrants in the greater urban area of Athens. More than one third were issued on grounds of family unification, 15 069 for employment reasons (either new or renewal of residence permits for work), and about half (73 277) for other reasons. The vast majority of those in the 'other' category have long-term residence statuses, i.e. either EU long-term status (long-

term permit obtained after completion of five years legal residence, proof of income and social security) or long-term statuses foreseen by national legislation: 10-year permits, permits of indefinite duration (after completion of ten years residence in Greece), the so-called "second generation" permits", as well as permanent residence (for spouses of Greeks). Refugees and Asylum seekers recent inflows:

Greece – and in particular the Aegean islands – has been at the forefront of the 2015-2016 "European Refugee Emergency" with over one million people arriving in total[3], the vast majority from war afflicted countries like Afghanistan and Syria. Before March 2016, the most arrivals remained on the islands for a limited time, before continuing their journey on the mainland. The situation changed after the closure of the so-called 'Balkans route' and the implementation of the Joint EU-Turkey Agreement of 18 March 2016. Following this, arrivals to Greek islands decreased significantly, yet the length of stay in national facilities increased. After the agreement, 98% of arrivals applied for asylum in Greece. UNHCR estimates that there are around 45 000 refugees remaining in Greece. Up to 15 000 are on the islands and some 30 000 on the mainland, including 22 000 in UNHCR-sponsored accommodation (UNHCR, 2018).

The number of refugees and asylum seekers in Athens is estimated currently at 15 000 people (more than 40% of refugees in Greece). According to preliminary observations, the district of western Athens seems particularly concerned with more than ten asylum seekers and refugees for every 1 000 people in comparison to the average of more than 4 every 1 000 people in the rest of Athens. On the 30 April 2017, there were 98 107 recorded and pending asylum applications in Greece. Procedures have also been accelerated, but still challenge the public system and a sizeable backlog remains (Proietti, P. and P. Veneri, 2017).

Further, accommodation for asylum seekers as well as for those granted international protection is scarce. Recognised refugees should reach their accommodation within a few weeks, but this is not the case for the time being. The risk is that in such a situation, a significant number of persons granted with protection will remain unable to provide for themselves and integrate the broader Greek society.

As of March 2018, there are 25 permanent camps in the country which are to gradually close and people residing there will be transferred to UNHCR homes created in rented apartments.

At the same time, many refugees do not intend to stay in Greece. A non-representative study by the Athens Observatory for Refugees and Migrants in Athens indicated that only 8% of the heads of family interviewed intend to stay in Greece, whereas 34% aim to return to their country of origin. Of the rest, 61% desire to go to Germany, 6% to Sweden, 4% to Switzerland, 4% to the Netherlands, 3% to the UK and 3% to France. This significant reluctance impedes both short-term as well as long-term integration, as few refugees are willing to learn the language and many do not see the point of their children attending school (Public Issue, 2016).

A further challenge relating to the situation is the increasing discontent of Greek nationals and existing migrant communities. The mobilisation of funds and resources for the management of the refugee crisis has fanned social tension, as some believe that the humanitarian response affects the quality and breadth of social and welfare services for nationals.

City well-being and inclusion[4]

The impact of the economic crisis

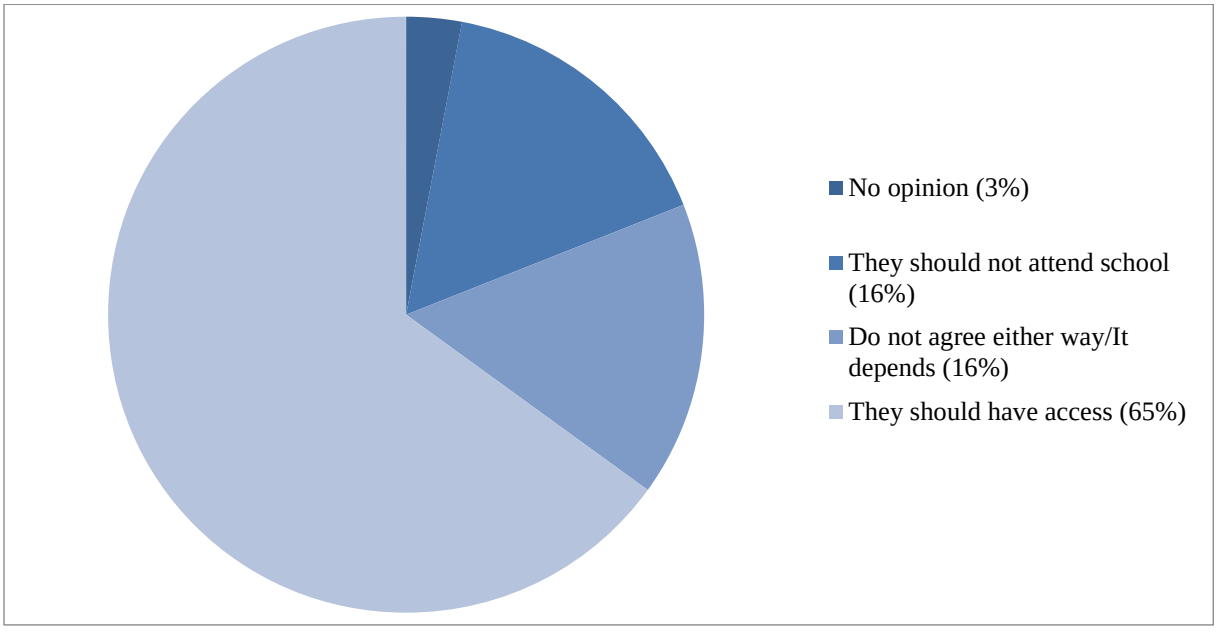
The ongoing economic crisis in Greece has had a significant impact. According to 2016 OECD data, since 2009, material conditions for people in Greece have declined significantly: average household net adjusted disposable income per capita decreased by 31.6% and average earnings dropped by 15.6% in 2013. In Greece, labour market insecurity is among the highest of the OECD. The long-term unemployment rate stands at 19.5%, after having increased by 15.6% between 2009 and 2014, and is today the highest in the OECD. Well-being in Attica is quite different from the average. Attica is performing worse than the other Greek regions in five dimensions of well-being: safety, health, sense of community and life satisfaction. It is performing equally in jobs and housing and it is performing better in education, income, environment, civic engagement and accessibility to services.

The crisis' impact was the most severe in cities/urban centres compromising their ability to deal with vulnerable groups, such as migrants.

Public perception of migrants

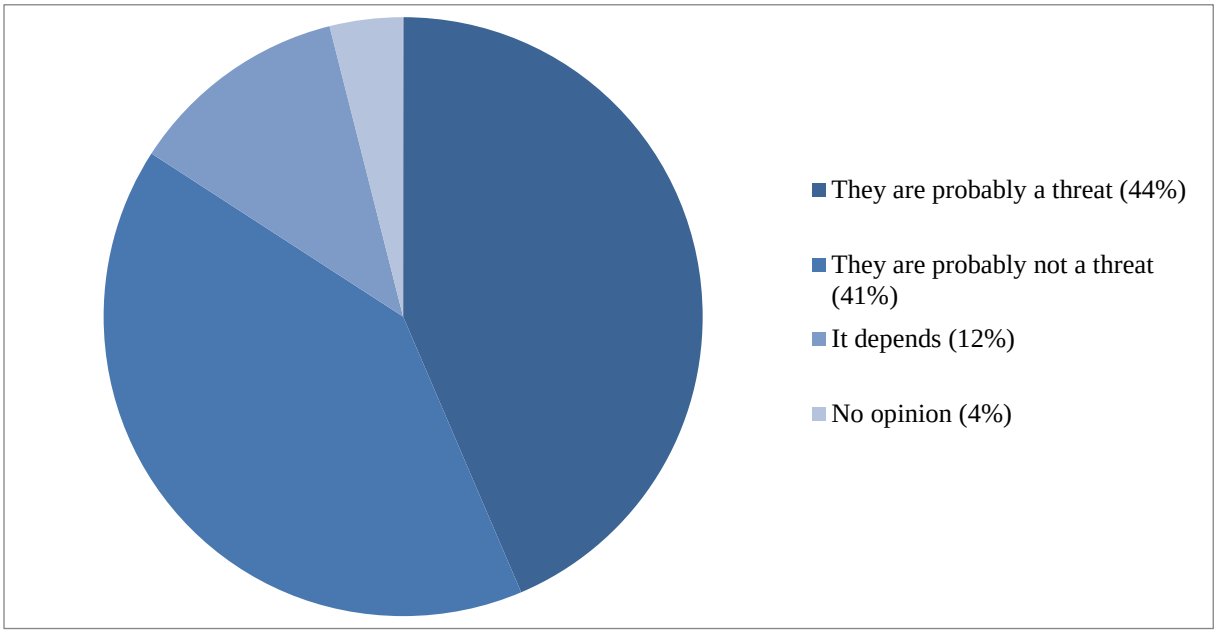
According to the Athens Observatory for Refugees and Migrants survey of public attitudes of the Municipality of Athens on refugees, published in 2017 (see Objective 8), a slightly different picture emerges (Responses were more positive on a number of indicators: 72% of respondents think that the refugees' children must have access to national education and must attend school (Figure 1.3), 44% think that the refugees constitute a threat for Greek society, whereas 41% think that they do not (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1. Should refugees' children have access to the Municipality's day care facilities?



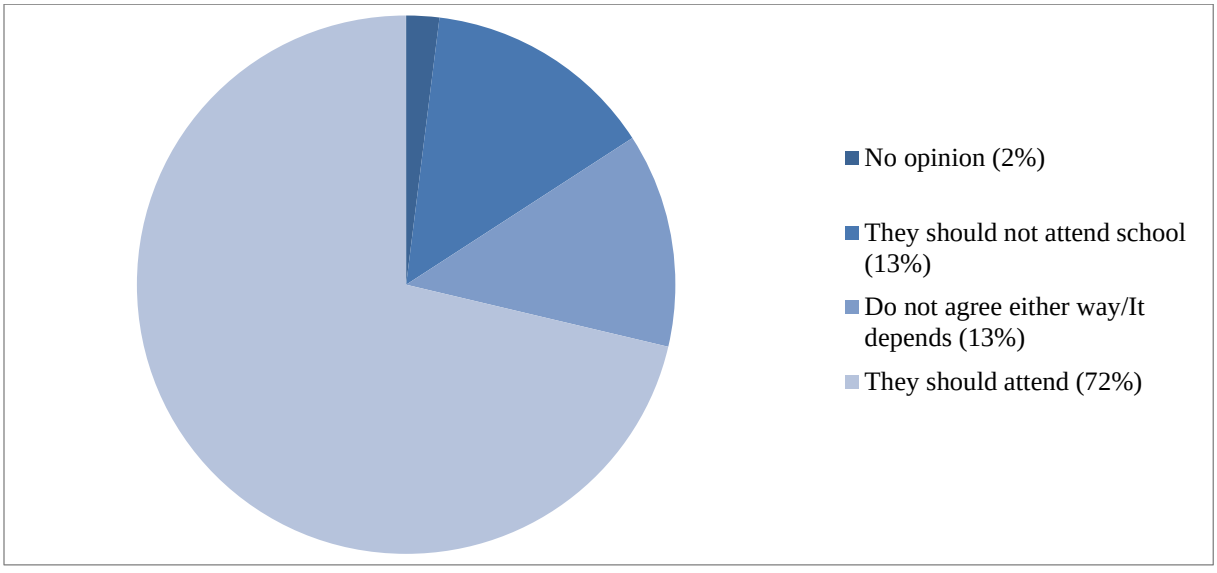
Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

Figure 1.2. Are refugees a threat to the country's security?



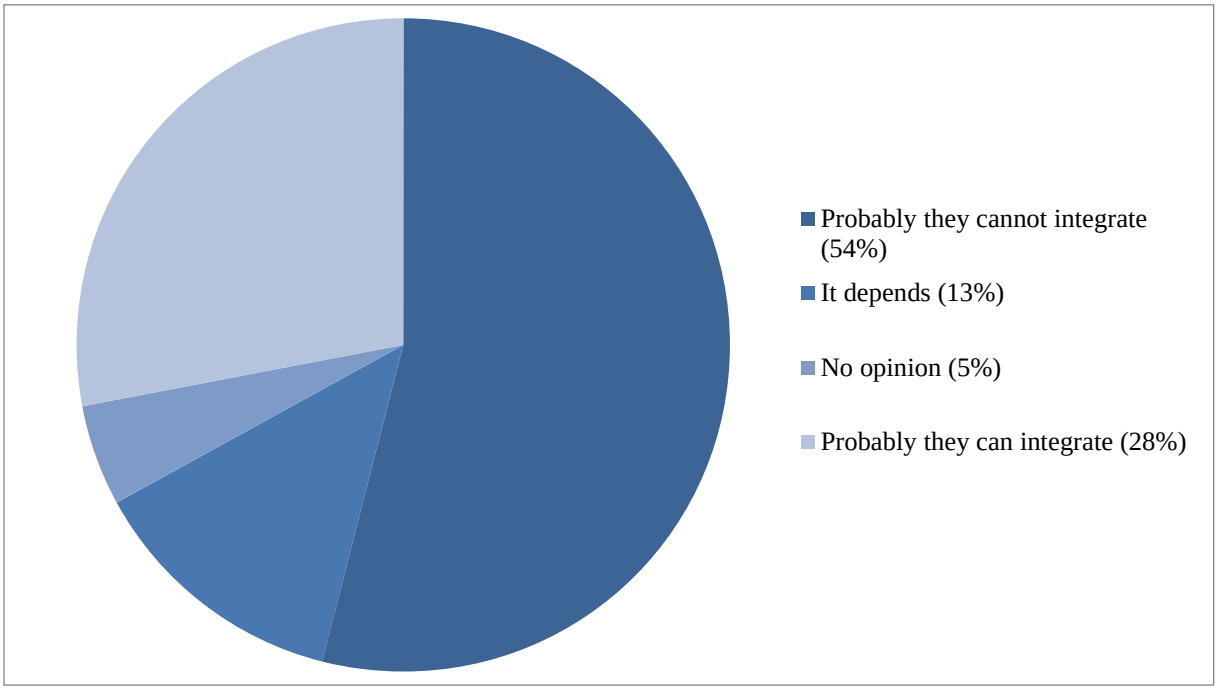
Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

Figure 1.3. Should refugees' children attend school?



Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

Figure 1.4. Can refugees integrate into the Greek society?



Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

However, national survey[5] results published in 2017 mirror some pessimistic views about the integration potential of migrants in Greek society and the threat the may pose to security in Greece. For instance, 88.3% of respondents think that the number of migrants in the country is excessively high; 64.4% think that the presence of migrants in the country increases criminality; while 58% think that the presence of migrants in the country increases unemployment. According to the same source, the public is divided with regard to issues of nationality and citizenship: for instance, 47% of respondents believe that one is born Greek whilst 48% believe that one becomes Greek.

Notes

[1] Anna Triantafyllou in 'Migration in Greece: People, Policies and Practices' IMRA project report mentions that there are different estimates of people returning according to Albanian authorities. In 2012 the head of the Directorate for the Migrants and Returnees at the Ministry of Labor, Social Issues and Equal Opportunities in Albania estimated that approximately 28 000 had returned since 2010; Top Channel TV, a large quality TV channel in Albania had claimed that out of half a million Albanians residing in Greece, approximately 15-20% were estimated to have returned to Albania, which is the same figure quoted in a Reuters report in April 2012, that is 15% or approximately 75 000 (document available on: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=media.download).

[2] There are seven main types of residence permits in Greece, including several subcategories: category A which covers residence permits for work and professional reasons (four subcategories); category B which covers temporary stay (including seven subcategories related to seasonal work and internships); category C which covers humanitarian, exceptional and other reasons (four subcategories including public interest); category D which covers studies, voluntary work,

research and professional training (four subcategories); category E which covers victims of human trafficking and trafficking of migrants; category F which covers family unification (four subcategories); category G which covers long term residence permit (four subcategories including second generation residence permit).

[3] According to FRONTEX, there were 763 038 violations detected on the Western Balkans route in 2015 and 122 779 violations in 2016. According to the Greek Police, 161 926 individuals were arrested for illegally crossing the border in Greece in 2016 while 10 583 individuals were arrested during the first quarter of 2017.

[4] Unless stated differently, all information in this paragraph has been gathered from OECD (2017a), *How's Life in Greece* and the OECD Metropolitan database.

[5] https://www.dianeosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ti_pistevoun_oi_ellines_final_version.pdf

Chapter 2. Responses to migrant integration in Athens

This section is structured following the Checklist for public action to migrant integration at the local level, as included in the Synthesis Report (OECD, 2018), which comprises a list of 12 key evidence-based objectives that can be used by policy makers and practitioners in the development and implementation of migrant integration programmes, at local, regional, national and international levels. This Checklist highlights for the first time common messages and cross-cutting lessons learnt around policy frameworks, institutions, and mechanisms that feature in policies for migrant and refugee integration.

This innovative tool has been elaborated by the OECD as part of the larger study on "Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees" supported by the European Commission, Directorate General for regional and urban policies. The Checklist is articulated according to four blocks and 12 objectives. This part gives a description of the actions implemented in Athens following this framework.

Box 2.1. A checklist for public action on migrant integration at the local level

Block 1. Multi-level governance: Institutional and financial settings

Objective 1. Enhance effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved vertical co-ordination and implementation at the relevant scale.

Objective 2. Seek policy coherence in addressing the multi-dimensional needs of, and opportunities for, migrants at the local level.

Objective 3. Ensure access to, and effective use of, financial resources that are adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration.

Block 2. Time and space: Keys for migrants and host communities to live together

Objective 4. Design integration policies that take time into account throughout migrants' lifetimes and evolution of residency status.

Objective 5. Create spaces where interaction brings migrant and native-born communities closer.

Block 3. Local capacity for policy formulation and implementation

Objective 6. Build capacity and diversity in civil service, with a view to ensure access to mainstream services for migrants and newcomers.

Objective 7. Strengthen co-operation with non-state stakeholders, including through transparent and effective contracts.

Objective 8. Intensify the assessment of integration results for migrants and host communities and apply them to develop evidence-based policies.

Block 4. Sectoral policies related to integration

Objective 9. Match migrant skills with economic and job opportunities.

Objective 10. Secure access to adequate housing.

Objective 11. Provide social welfare measures that are aligned with migrant inclusion.

Objective 12. Establish education responses to address segregation and provide equitable paths to professional growth.

Block 1: Multi-level governance: institutional and financial setting

Objective 1: Enhance effectiveness of migrant integration policy through improved vertical co-ordination and implementation at the relevant scale

Allocation of Competences for migration-related matters

Migration policy in Greece - including migrants' integration - is largely the competence of national government and its relevant ministries.

The Greek state consists of three levels of administration and governance: the central, the regional, and the local level. The central level includes the national government, the ministries and the various departments and agencies of public administration that are also located in regions. The regional level comprises thirteen regions. Regions have no competences related to migrant integration. Regional councils and the regional governor are popularly elected every five years. The local level consists of 325 municipalities, where the municipal councils and mayors are also directly elected by popular vote every five years. Since the late 1980s and especially since the 1990s, a series of reforms attempted to modernise, restructure and decentralise the public administration and the country territorial and government structures. They sought to strengthen local government entities in Greece, as well as to promote a degree of decentralisation by transferring a number of competences. Since the 1980s reform initiatives also brought about a gradual reduction in the total number of local government entities. Yet, despite some decentralisation Greece continues to be characterised by a high degree of centralisation overall and in comparison to most European states (See Annex A).

Box 2.2. Kallikratis reform of decentralisation in Greece

The 'Kallikratis Project' plan significantly increased the competencies of municipalities in the sphere of social policy. The new responsibilities transferred to the municipalities in the field of social policy were related to day care for children, the protection of elderly people, support for families and vulnerable groups, the implementation of public health programmes, and the tackling of social exclusion and marginalisation of the poor, immigrants, and the uninsured. Municipalities establish and/or operate nursery schools, orphanages, care centres, centres of entertainment for the elderly, nursing homes and a variety of social programmes. The 'Kallikratis' reform also provides for a wide array of municipal competences in the sphere of health. Additionally, municipal authorities are in charge of the distribution of national benefits related to a variety of health conditions and disability, benefits related to housing and to the support for unprotected children. Most significantly, under 'Kallikratis' municipalities are also given the possibility of implementing actions to facilitate the economic and cultural integration of vulnerable groups such as the Roma, migrants, refugees and returning expatriates. For a more complete description of the Kallikratis Project refer to Annex 1.

Previous Greek migration policy can be described as a series of ad hoc regularisation programmes – four in total (in 2001, 2005 and 2007) – aimed at the legalisation of immigrants who had entered the country since 1990. It allowed for large numbers of undocumented migrants residing in the country to obtain short-term and renewable residence permits (under conditions, see Annex B). Law 3386/2005 on the 'Entry, stay and integration of Third Country Nationals in Greece' is considered as the first law recognising migration as a long-term and permanent phenomenon, even though it did not explicitly address integration issues. Its main aim was to implement the EU directives 2003/86 on the right to family reunification and 2003/109 on the status of long-term residents. Basic knowledge of Greek language, history and culture were determined as prerequisites for acquiring long-term residence status. Regarding undocumented

migrants, Law 3386/2005 explicitly prohibited such migrants from accessing services provided by Greek public entities, local government bodies, and social security organisations (Article 84). However, it must be noted that access to school is free and unlimited to all children of non EU-nationals irrespective of their parents' legal status and that undocumented migrants have access to hospitals and clinics in case of emergency or childbirth, as well their minor children in all cases (emergency or not).

The current migration legal framework is defined by the Law 4251/2014 "Code for Immigration & Social Integration", as well as by very important and very relevant legislative amendments since then (e.g. Law 4332/2015).

Criteria for naturalisation of Non-EU residents are described in Annex 2. There is no written test but the candidate must pass an oral test before a citizenship committee (Epitropi Politografisis) who decides on the candidates' overall knowledge of the country as well as on the candidate's sufficient level of Greek language. There are no systematic funded courses (a course run from 2008-2011 funded by the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), which was addressed to those who desired to acquire a certificate necessary to secure long-term residency, see below); however, a manual entitled 'Greece, second homeland' is available for those who prepare for their oral exam before the committee.[1] The only law, which made an attempt at integration prior to 2015, was the 3838/2010 Law aiming to facilitate the naturalisation of second generation migrants and providing migrants the possibility of voting in local elections. This however was deemed unconstitutional in 2012 and never came into force.

A debate about models of integration in Greece existed prior to 2015. In 2003 the Social integration department was established in the Ministry of Interior. However the large influx of refugee arrivals from 2015 onwards made the debate on migrant and refugee integration more pressing. The need to act facilitated the introduction of the Ministry of Migration Policy in 2015, superseding a general Secretariat for Migration Policy within the Ministry of Interior, which had published an integration strategy in 2013. The strategy materialised through 92 projects funded by the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants (EIF).

The inauguration on 4 November 2016 of a Ministry of Migration Policy was based on the idea of building a holistic and effective approach to migrant integration issues. The Ministry for Migration Policy was set up incorporating, under an autonomous portfolio, the units responsible for non-EU citizens' entry and residence in Greece, reception - identification, asylum and integration issues, which previously belonged to the Ministry of Interior.

The Ministry was tasked to manage the different aspects of migration, including the emergencies related to the humanitarian crisis, as well as migrants' residence and integration.

Together with the impact of the economic crisis, the absence of a coordinated approach has led until now to rather fragmented policy for migrant integration. However a new strategy for migrant integration and refugee reception is under consultation (June 2018) with Ministries, local authorities, NGOs and the private sector. It would help address coordination challenges among the public as well as non-state stakeholders at national, local and international levels involved in reception and integration mechanisms. The recent Greek Ombudsman report on 'Migration Flows and Refugee Protection' highlighted this problematic issue.[2]

Municipal Level

The high degree of centralisation in Greece means that Municipalities have limited ability to play a decisive role in migrants' integration. Compared to all unitary OECD countries Greece's sub-national government spending is the lowest with only 7.1% of public expenditure spent at the sub-national level, against OECD average of 40.4% (OECD, 2017b). Crucial aspects of integration – most notably education and employment – are the competence of national government and the relevant ministries.

The only competence related to migrant integration (education in particular) that is entirely executed, by law, at municipal level is day care for children (*Vrefokomeio*).

Since the 1990s migration started to be seen as an issue that municipalities could participate in managing. Municipalities acquired de facto an increasing role either by implementing national law on migration[3], and/or by providing services to local inhabitants, including migrants, something that varies significantly depending on the local administration's disposition towards migrants. In 2006 a law (Law 3463/2006, Art. 75) did not expand municipal competences, but gave them the possibility to implement extra programmes aiming at the integration of Roma, returning Greeks, migrants and refugees to the social, economic and political life of the community.

In this sense, municipalities like Athens implement additional projects to complement national competences while the core responsibilities related to integration, like employment, education or housing remain national competences. The changes brought about by the Kallikratis reform (See Annex A) were reflected to a very limited extent in the local institutional framework with regards to migrants' integration, most notably by the creation of the Migration Integration Council (MIC) that ensures that migrants' point of view is taken into account in city council's decisions that affect them. The MICs are a national measure introduced in Athens in 2011 (Described in Objective 7).

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Reception mechanisms for refugees and asylum seekers are the responsibility of the national authorities. These populations are spread across the mainland and the islands mostly in camps in which the UNHCR plays a crucial role after agreement with the central government. More generally, the role of international and local NGOs has also been central in managing the refugee emergency response inside and outside the camps. The Ministry of Migration Policy re-distributes refugees and asylum seekers to different accommodations across the country. Distribution is based on nationality, vulnerability and other criteria; however, those criteria are not precise.

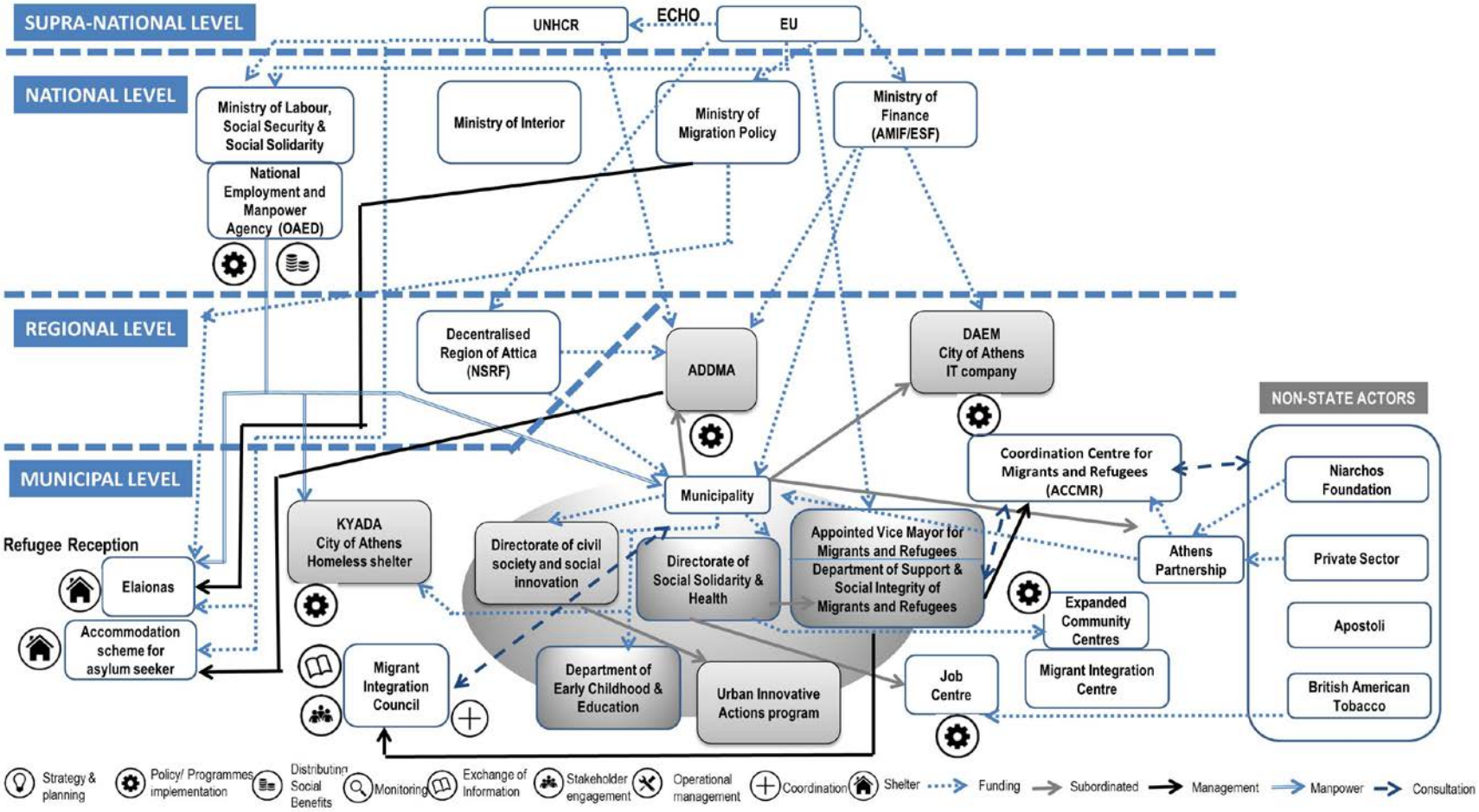
Information gap among levels of government is signalled by the municipality of Athens pertaining to the dispersal process and the presence of refugees in their city, for which consultation could improve policy implementation. Better information sharing could, for example, facilitate the city preparedness and adaptability to react to changes in NGO involvement.

The management of the Elaionas Camp in Athens (Box 2.4) is an important example of how coordination of different stakeholders across levels is relevant to implement and address asylum seekers' needs. The housing structure that provides temporary shelter for asylum seekers is co-managed by the Ministry of Migration and UNHCR, along with the Municipality of Athens, the Ministry of Education (providing education coordinators), the Greek Police (external security), the Centre for Control and Prevention of Diseases

(Ministry of Health) and a number of national NGOs (such as PRAXIS, Elaia, Nostos) and International NGOs UNICEF, IRC, SOS Children's Villages Greece).

The institutional mapping synthetises the coordination mechanisms between levels of government on migrant and refugee integration.

Figure 2.1: Institutional Mapping of Athens



Implementation of integration policies at the relevant scale

The Municipality of Athens cooperates with the bordering municipalities whenever necessary, however, it should be noted that the official union of municipalities (KEDE) has not reached a common agreement regarding refugees and migrants issues.

The City of Athens took the initiative to establish a cooperation framework with other Greek municipalities by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with 8 municipalities in Greece in order to develop institutional capacity and transfer of knowledge through the Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee ACCMR (see Objective 2). In this context, the community-based approach that ACCMR has introduced, envisions to support – in terms of practices and tools – other municipalities in Greece in addressing migrant and refugee needs, and inspires them to develop similar mechanisms. Capacity transfers also take place with regards to evaluation mechanisms (described in Objective 8).

Objective 2: Seek policy coherence in addressing multi-dimensional migrant needs at the local level

Cities' institutional setting with relevance to migrant integration

Overall, the Municipality has 37 departments. The three departments that are directly involved in the integration of migrants are the Directorate of Early Childhood and Education, the Directorate of Social Solidarity and Health, the Directorate of Civil Society and Social Innovation as well as the Urban Innovative actions programme. The Directorate of Social Solidarity and Health is responsible for the Expanded Community Centres, which offer services to all publics including migrants. Legal entities under municipal control such as ADDMA, DAEM and KYADA also play a role in refugee and migrant integration as will be described in block 2.4.

Up to 2015, the Municipality had one employee working on migrant issues and administrative support of the Migrant Integration Council[4] (See Objective 7). The current mayor appointed a Vice-Mayor for Migrants and Refugees in February 2016, mostly as a response to the refugee peak. Following his appointment, a Department of Support and Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees was created in November 2016, within the Directorate of Social Solidarity and Health. The Department activities are not funded by the municipal budget but by complementary resources such as European and private funds (see Objective 3) that allowed the department to recruit three people running the ACCMR described below.

City vision and approach to integration

As mentioned above, cities play de facto a role in implementing integration policies by providing services to local inhabitants, including migrants. In this sense Athens implements additional initiatives related to migrant and refugee integration to complement national action, through ad hoc programs. These actions are largely based on available funding and political will, which might undermine the city's capacity to build on past experience and ensure sustainability of service provision for these groups. Presently, all funding for migrant and refugee issues comes from either European funds or private donors.

Since 2010, the Athens administration has emphasised the importance of anti-discrimination issues and equal access to social policies. While there was no clear and

systematic policy for integration, the current social policy action plan for 2015-2019 has a particular emphasis on vulnerable social groups and a chapter on migrant and refugee integration[5].

Since the unprecedented number of refugee arrivals from beginning of 2015, the City of Athens has increasingly adopted a proactive approach to address the needs of this vulnerable group. In particular, the city worked on a Strategic Action Plan for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees that was approved by the Mayor in April 2018. This plan was developed within the framework of the Athens Coordination Centre for Refugees and Migrants (ACCMR)[6] with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). The ACCMR is a partnership involving 75 members (state and non-state actors) operating in migration and refugee related activities. Partner consultations identified needs and gaps in services available to these groups living in Athens. Further, the strategy took into account the evidence resulting from the AORI survey (Public Issue, 2016) described in Objective 8. Finally, the municipal team has sought the input of international experts and practitioners participating in the ACCMR's Working Committees and Forum. The plan is not creating parallel systems for refugees and establishes paths that are valid also for other vulnerable groups.

The Strategic Action Plan takes into consideration the limited competences of local governments in Greece, and suggests the development of a holistic local service delivery system that aims for refugees and migrants to reach independence from welfare and become contributing members of their new society. The Action plan establishes clear referral pathways to avoid cumbersome mechanisms across public service. It is designed to provide a framework with clearly-defined objectives to strengthen the Municipality's role in its engagement with civil society and non-profit service providers. The plan foresees a framework to monitor and safeguard the implementation of the integration plan that the Municipality, together with ACCMR members, has to implement while contributing to a process of capacity building at all levels.

The formulation of the plan included a broad consultation with civil society representatives, following a bottom-up approach for policy development, although it seems migrants and refugee representatives were not systematically involved. Especially taking into account the austerity measures imposed on the city, this plan represents an ambitious advancement that can transform the way both the city, and all stakeholders, respond to the needs of migrants and refugees. As part of its work the ACCMR is also developing a contingency mechanism to improve the city's preparedness in the event of refugee related emergencies (ACCMR, 2017) in the future. In addition the ACCMR suggests policy changes that require national level involvement such as protocols for asylum seekers requests and services that irregular migrants can access.

Another example of the city's approach to integration is the city project called "Curing the limbo - from apathy to active citizenship: empowering refugees and migrants in limbo to make housing affordable". This multi-dimensional project, addressing housing and unemployment at the same time, shows how the municipality has internalised the principle that integration needs to start as soon as possible (see Objective 4). It now believes that integration has to happen simultaneously, though different aspects of newcomers' lives, and that it represents an opportunity to rethink urban space, transform spaces that are currently empty, and revitalise declining neighbourhoods. As described in Objective 3, Athens and 15 other cities were selected, in October 2017, to take part in the "Urban Innovative Actions" programme. The ERDF-funded programme started in April 2018 and develops around a housing-for-work system. Through the project refugees

receive affordable living spaces from the city's available housing stock and in return, they work for the public benefit, supporting the needs of the local community and participating in citizen-led activities that improve quality of life in Athenian neighbourhoods. The provided on-the-job training, supervised by the University of Athens, includes language learning, psychosocial support, and other basic social and soft skills. These skills are tailored to the beneficiaries' needs and are offered in an integrated way, during which other parallel activities are also gradually introduced. The programme is set to be completed in March 2021 (UIA, n.d.).

One-stop-shop of integration services

Integration service hubs/one-stop-shops can be a powerful mechanism to facilitate migrant navigation into administrative offices and support coherent public action at the local level. The Municipality of Athens has developed and operates two Expanded Community Centers under the umbrella management of the Directorate of Social Solidarity and Health and are supervised by different departments within the directorate, in close collaboration with the Vice Mayor for Migrants and Refugees who supervises the Migrant Integration Centers. They serve all Athenian residents – nationals, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers alike – and function as hubs for social welfare services, health clinics and employability services. They illustrate the municipal effort to better coordinate the offer of social services to all publics. As a result of an initiative of the Ministry for Migration Policy to set up Migrant integration centres all over the country, two Migrant Integration Centres have been established within the expanded community centres. As described in Objective 4, the Migrant Integration Centres set out to mainstream orientation, information, and translation for migrant groups into regular services provided in the expanded community centre. Funding for these centres was secured by the municipality through a call for proposals by the Regional Government of Attica for European Social Funding addressed to all municipalities in Attica.

Utilise consultative mechanisms with migrant communities at local level

In Greece, Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) aim to promote the political and civic participation of migrant communities at the local level. They are entrusted with a consultative role on issues pertaining to migrant integration in local communities. Specifically, their role is to identify integration problems faced by third country nationals legally residing in various municipalities and submit recommendations and proposals to the municipal councils concerning the development of local actions for the smooth integration of migrants in local societies.

The Migrant Integration Council of Athens (MIC), established in 2011, convenes at least once a month and brings together the Vice-Mayor with six representatives of migrant communities[7]. The MIC has no decision-making power, however through this consultation, migrant communities effectively advocate their grievances. For instance, the Philippine community lobbied very strongly to change the criteria for children's access to municipal day care. In the past, both parents were required to have legal permits to benefit from the nursery and the municipality changed the requirement to one parent with a legal permit.

The funding of the Athens' MIC derives from the budget of the Municipality of Athens, along with donations and sponsorships as well as by its participation in European Research Programmes.

Even though it is widely recognised by the migrants' communities as an important tool for communicating with local authorities, the lack of adequate resources and administrative support and, perhaps even more importantly, the lack of concrete competencies and the limitation of the MIC to a purely consultative role is being pointed out by the communities as a shortcoming in the meaningful and influential function of the MICs. Several members of migrant communities interviewed during the OECD visit, shared the wish that the MIC would lobby in a more structured way with the central level on the issues raised by the members, such as access to insurance for migrant workers. Many of the issues raised in the MIC (e.g., tax issues, social security, discrimination, etc.) are not a municipal competence. However, the municipality can voice migrants' appeals to the National Council on anti-discrimination and through letters and appeals to policy makers.

Objective 3: Ensure access to, and effective use of financial resources that are adapted to local responsibilities for migrant integration

The fiscal and economic crisis resulted in a substantial decline of municipalities' financial resources. In 2009-2013, central transfers to the municipalities decreased by 60%, leading to a significant reduction in the size of their administrative personnel, and creating substantial burdens in their ability to implement the expanded array of competences transferred to the municipalities with the decentralisation reform 'Kallikratis' (see box 2.2). To make the best use of its funding the Municipality is planning to link national Social Solidarity Income (see Objective 11) to the municipal social welfare system as to offer a more comprehensive approach to those most in need. This could be an example of overcoming silos in financing streams for vulnerable people.

In this context of municipal budget cuts, Athens seeks most of the funding for migrant and refugee integration from external sources. No extra funding has been allocated by the national government for the management of the refugee crisis or for migrants' integration at the local level, with the exception of external funding (i.e., EU funds) channelled through locally represented national institutions.

External funding currently originates from the European Commission, which has foreseen a wide set of financial tools through its structural and investment funds to contribute to its immigration policy. DG ECHO financed the Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation (ESTIA) programme in order to manage the humanitarian crisis stemming by the influx of refugees that occurred in 2015. This fund is managed through the UNHCR office in Greece. The European Union Structural and Investment Funds including European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are available at the national level. The management of these funds is coordinated by the Ministry of Economy according to the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007–2013 then the Partnership Agreement (ESPA) 2014-2020. The Partnership agreement describes also the coordination with other EU funding programmes such as the Asylum and Migration Integration Fund (AMIF). Specific funds are allocated through the Regions to local governments through the Integrated Territorial Investment Programs. Athens successfully bid for an Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy for the current programming period for a total of EUR 85 million, which is managed by the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA) described below.

The Municipality has access to the AMIF via open calls organised by the Ministry of Economy, which is the managing authority of AMIF in Greece. For the funding period 2014 to 2020 the EU has allocated to Greece EUR 561 million through the AMIF. As of

December 2017, EUR 126 million had been disbursed. During the funding period 2008-2015, five projects funded by the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU immigrants (EIE) – henceforth renamed Asylum and Migration Integration Fund (AMIF) – were implemented by the Municipality via the 'City of Athens IT Company' DAEM SA', a software development company that belongs to the Municipality.[8]

Some horizontal EU funds, such as the Urban Agenda (Urban Innovative Actions) are accessible by the Municipality via open calls. In October 2017, the city of Athens was selected with 15 other cities by the "Urban Innovative Actions" ERDF-funded programme for its submitted proposal in the thematic Integration of Migrants and Refugees, entitled "Curing the limbo-from apathy to active citizenship: empowering refugees and migrants in limbo state to ignite housing affordability" (see Objective 10).

Other EU funding flows to national authorities include funding for the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Migration Policy, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, Ministry of Health. Further, the EU ISF (Internal Security Fund), that promotes law enforcement and border management allocated EUR 385 million of which EUR 279 million had been disbursed as of December 2017. In addition, the country has benefitted from EUR 385 million in emergency assistance since 2015 (European Commission, 2017).

However, the absorption[9] rate for the European funding schemes is insufficient, amounting to only 30% in November 2017 (Ioannou, 2017), calling for better coordination of public action to enhance the effective implementation of integration policies, in particular with local authorities.

The Municipality also receives donations from the private sector, such as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, which has played a very active role to help address the effects of the economic and social crisis as well as the refugee peak of arrivals. Private donations are managed through the Athens Partnership (AP), an entity that mediates between the city of Athens and donations for greater flexibility. The Athens Partnership was launched in 2015 with lead support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and strategic guidance from Bloomberg Associates with the objective to implement innovative public programmes supported by donations to the municipality of Athens. It works in lock step with the municipality, private sector partners and global philanthropic leaders. The Partnership seeks to address the general needs of the Athenian population, including initiatives directly linked to migrant integration. Amongst other objectives it aims at developing a preparedness mechanism.

In addition, smaller size partnerships have been concluded with supermarket companies, food companies, bakeries and telephone companies.

Block 2: Time and Space: keys for migrants and host communities to live together

This section describes the leading principles of the city's reception and integration policies. Across the ten cities analysed in the case studies, the concepts of time and space appear to be essential in conceptualising sustainable solutions. Time is understood as the continuum in which solutions are executed in the city: from short-term reception and orientation, to long-term settling in the city along the key milestones of a migrant and his/her family lives. Space is understood as proximity and is well-illustrated by the word "connecting" that cities have adopted in their approach to integration. The aim being that different communities can connect around spaces, activities, causes or housing solutions that facilitate regular interaction and break down prejudices and cultural barriers.

Objective 4: Design integration policies that take time into account throughout migrants' lifetimes and status evolution

The notion that integration should start as early as possible and accompany migrants along their entire lives has structured current responses that are set up in Athens.

In Athens are situated two of the ten Migrant Integration Centers[10] that have been opened by the national government across Greek cities. These centers are Departments of the Expanded Community Centers (see Objective 5). The initiative aims at ensuring an entry point for migrants, to universal services along their lives. The centres provide guidance towards other services according to the need of the beneficiaries such as accommodation, job advice, job hunting and financial aid, as well as initial support as required and direction to social services for newcomers. In these centres intercultural mediators are present to support migrants in accessing public services and to orient them to the relevant local actors. The initiative is set up through EU funds distributed through regional authorities (Attica in the case of Athens). Similar types of programmes can be observed in other cities taking part in this study, for instance the SAIER in Barcelona and the integration office in Gothenburg. These services are thought to be entry points for migrants as they arrive in the cities as well as for providing advice and emergency intervention throughout their lives.

The Migrant Integration Centre aims to offer the following specialised services to migrants and refugees:

- Orientation and information services relevant to immigrants and asylum seekers in different languages
- Interpreting and translation in facilitating access to mainstream services for migrant groups
- Guidance towards other services according to the need of the beneficiaries such as accommodation, job advice, job hunting, financial aid, etc.
- Initial support as required and direction to social services for newcomers
- Synergies with other public organisations, NGOs, migrant and refugee associations directed towards immigrant communities
- Directly provide language courses and acquiring computer skills
- Workshops with an intercultural character that will involve immigrants and local citizens, young people and parents with their children that will add to social and cultural integration.

Another initiative that mirrors the effort of the city to involve those migrants who have been in the city for a longer time or were born there is the support to the migrant association Generation 2.0. This association counts among its members second-generation migrants from different countries in their 20s and 30s. They are active in advocating with the municipal council to increase their visibility as the new generation of Greeks, including accessing public positions and media campaigns. It is an example of young migrants coming together, in their dialogue with public authorities, around a "generational" concern that is no longer characterised by "cultural" grievances associated with different national origins. They suggest gaining more public visibility and interaction with local communities by organising joint activities, such as building a botanical garden in a public space.

Objective 5: Create spaces where interaction brings migrant and native-born communities closer

Athens has set its goal to become a proactive and vibrant city in its resilience strategy, striving to *"[…] create trustworthy and a safe environment for its people" and to […] to promote well-being, creativity, entrepreneurship and a new, inclusive, and exciting identity."* (100 Resilient Cities, 2017). This also includes improvements of the public realm and increasing the use of public spaces, engage in neighbourhoods and bring people together. Initiatives creating spaces to bring people together have already been carried out.

One such space is the Melissa community-based integration centre created in one of the neighbourhoods in central Athens especially hard hit by the crises and progressive degradation. The Melissa network brings together migrant women from 45 nationalities and is one of the few organisations in Athens catering specifically to refugee women integration. The integration pathways 'Alef' is implemented with the support of Mercy Corps and the Municipality of Athens. On a daily basis, the centre receives more than a hundred refugee women who commute from shelters and camps such as the Elaionas Camp (see Box 2.4). Here they are taught how to code, speak Greek, develop leadership skills – and even how to decipher fake news. Not only does Melissa offer a space for connecting but it also fosters interaction between newcomers and the neighbourhood, outside of the refugee camp. In addition, it is an example of how successful integration builds on the expertise and knowledge of who is already there, including of migrant communities. With their perspective and understanding of migration and asylum, migrant women are the best placed to connect with newly arrived refugee women, creating opportunities for them to make positive contributions to the refugee community and overall social cohesion in Greece[11].

Another example of transforming spaces to foster connections between different groups in the city are the initiatives undertaken in child day care facilities. From April to June 2015 the Athens municipality implemented the programme "Together" aiming at transforming a number of municipal child day care facilities into meeting spaces for native-born and migrant families. Through multicultural events taking place outside normal working hours, the programme promoted integration between native and migrant children and between native-born and migrant parents.

Places of worship are important for making migrants feel respected in all dimensions of their lives in their new cities. Even though the municipality is not tangibly involved (nor does it have competences in the construction of places of worship) in religious activity, the position of the Municipal Authority is crucial in promoting a sense of support and confidence among migrant communities and native-born people, or conversely in triggering distrust and close-mindedness. The construction of a central mosque in the Municipality of Athens is currently progressing after being an issue of contention and strong opposition for many years. Since 2010, the Mayor of Athens has publicly stated that the construction of a mosque is a necessity both for practical and legal reasons, adding that it will pave the way for officially recognising informal mosques.

In recent years, Athens' municipal authorities have organised or supported a number of events that promote cultural diversity, in an attempt to empower migrants, raise awareness regarding their rights, and facilitate dialogue between native and migrant communities. In this perspective, in May 2015, the 'Open Window' festival was co-organised by the Migrant Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens, and a number of migrant associations, such as Asante, Al Masar and the Albanian Association,

among others. The festival was aiming at providing the participants and visitors with a platform to become acquainted with different cultures, and at demonstrating that cultural differences can unite, rather than alienate, people. In this regard, the two-day festival included a number of events and activities, such as a photo exhibition, ethnic cuisine and a bazaar.

Similarly, in June 2015, the "1st Multicultural Festival 'I Have a Dream': United Second Generation" was co-organised by civil society actors, such as ANASA Cultural Centre and Heinrich Böll Foundation, and Technopolis City of Athens, a corporation that operates under the auspices of the Municipality of Athens. The aim of the festival was to promote and safeguard second-generation migrants' rights, and it included talks, exhibitions, workshops, and theatre plays, among others. Finally, on 21 February 2014, a five-day festival took place on the premises of Technopolis City of Athens as a celebration of the International Mother Language Day. The festival, which was co-organised by METAction NGO and AKTO educational group with the support of the Municipality of Athens, included exhibitions and workshops that aimed to celebrate and promote cultural and language diversity.

Block 3: Capacity for policy formulation and implementation

Objective 6: Build-up capacity and diversity of public service, particularly in the key services of receiving migrants and newcomers

Since the implementation of austerity measures in 2010, Greek municipalities are not allowed to appoint new public servants with consequences for implementing projects and initiatives with regard to migrant integration, among other issues. For instance, the staff currently employed to assist in the management of the refugee camps (Elaionas Open Hospitality Structure staff) is appointed on temporary eight-month contracts via the National Employment and Manpower Agency. Temporary staff working on refugee related tasks for the municipality is often funded by EU funds or private funds on the basis of open calls. Limitations to appointing permanent personnel would forbid such recruitment even if the municipality could secure funding via other (non-central) sources. The municipality estimates that they need around 100 more social workers to optimise the response to refugee arrivals.

Different projects aim at developing the skills of municipal staff and health services to plan and implement integration-related actions in the local community. The training includes applying for external funding for actions targeting migrant groups. Often these training programmes are implemented through EU-funded projects.

However, the country's needs in terms of capacity building remain significant. One of the major problems remains the language barrier as several migrants cannot make use of the opportunities, initiatives or programmes offered because of limited knowledge of Greek. Limited familiarity with how to complete the required administrative procedures as well as limited knowledge of the initiatives is also a common reason for migrants' underuse of Municipal services. To address this barrier, efforts would be needed from both sides: on the one hand, public services should appoint cultural mediators and interpreters as well as making sure that administrative documents are translated in several languages (e.g., Amsterdam, Vienna, Berlin where multi-lingual welcome kits - including in Farsi and Arabic have been published); on the other side, language obstacles can be removed by investing in migrants' and refugees' learning. However, there is no systematic language training in place (see Objective 12) at all levels.

An interesting initiative for increasing diversity and participation in public service is the Open Society Fellowship launched in January 2018. The Open Society Foundation finances one full-time officer to work at the municipality on projects and programmes related to the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the cities. The officer is selected among refugees from the Middle East, North Africa or Southwest Asia, based in Athens, who have demonstrated commitment within their community. This action is simultaneously implemented also in Amsterdam, Berlin and Barcelona, it aims not only at increasing diversity, but also improving the communication and collaboration between refugee and migrant communities and city policy makers.

In order to improve its integration model the Municipality has been actively engaging with other European and non-European cities to learn from their experience particularly on integration planning. The city is a member of several partnerships that enable the exchange of practice. One example is the '100 Resilient Cities'[12] programme aiming at planning strategic actions to adapt and transform cities in an age of migration.

“Solidarity Cities: cities acting for refugees integration”, is a EUROCITIES programme launched by the mayor of Athens October 2016[13]. It aims to constitute the network of EU cities for mutual assistance, capacity building and advocacy in migrant and refugee integration and the need for sharing of responsibilities across levels of government. The network includes a reporting system and a work group that ensures regular exchange. For instance, the network organised, in late 2017, an experience-sharing workshop on how to best collaborate with foundations. Within this framework, an especially close relationship between the cities of Amsterdam and Athens has been established, and both were very active in launching Solidarity Cities. In fact, the mayor of Athens awarded the "Medal of Honour and Benefaction" of the City of Athens to the mayor of Amsterdam. The two cities exchange not only in the field of migrant integration but also in innovation, entrepreneurship, policies for drug addicts, the activation of civil society, climate change initiatives and sustainable development.

Another example of the key role that Athens undertakes in international knowledge management and advocacy around migrant and refugee integration is the Urban Agenda for the European Union Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees. The initiative coordinated by the city of Amsterdam and the Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the European Commission focuses on improving access to European funding, improving EU-regulations and promoting knowledge exchange, including in the area of measurement and evaluation.

Objective 7: Strengthen co-operation with non-state stakeholders, including through transparent and effective contracts

Non-state actors like foundations and NGOs have an essential role in delivering services to migrants and refugees in Athens. As described in Objective 3, in 2015 the Athens Partnership (AP) was launched with lead support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation – to facilitate innovative public programmes in Athens. The AP is an example of close collaboration between the City of Athens, private sector partners and global philanthropic leaders to finance and support initiatives and programmes addressing the general needs of the Athenian population, with some actions focusing on migrant integration. Such schemed make coordination of initiatives funded by the private sector and charities more efficient and targeted. The implementation of the Observatory and the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR) is just one of a dozen initiatives the AP manages.

The AP provided a specific grant to the municipal department Support & Social Integrity of Migrants and Refugees to recruit a team that runs the operation of the Centre (ACCMR).

The centre functions as a coordination platform between 75 members, who are engaged in refugee and migrant integration in the city (donors, representatives of civil society, local and international NGOs, foundation as well as the city administration). Over 200 representatives of the members are actively involved in ACCMR's operations. The Centre structures its work in five committees that serve a specific sector (housing, employment, health, education, legal support). Each committee meets once a month to identify gaps in the current service delivery and to design new municipal activities. The Centre also contributed to the development of a strategic action plan for the integration of migrants and refugees. In addition the ACCMR supports the efforts to put in place a monitoring and evaluation system of integration (see Objective 8).

Objective 8: Intensify the assessment of integration results for migrants and host communities and use them in evidence-based policies

The lack of data on migrant flows and integration outcomes is a persistent problem in Greece. This has been identified in the recent report on 'Migrant Flows and Refugee Protection' of the Greek Ombudsman as one of the obstacles in designing effective social policies and has raised issues of transparency.[14]

The Municipality of Athens launched the Athens Observatory for Refugees and Migrants (AORI) in October 2016 to monitor refugee and migrant flows and integration outcomes through funding from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

AORI aims at collecting not only demographic and socio-economic data but also public attitudes of the residents towards newcomers. This can contribute towards shedding light on the living conditions of many migrants, untapped possibilities as well as challenges and opportunities that arise from increased diversity. A first opinion survey carried out in December 2016 collected responses from Athens' residents, examples of questions asked have been provided in page 29. The results have been used for policy making on several occasions, for the formulation of the Strategic plan for integration, for the structures and the priorities established by ACCMRI working committees. Lastly they were used in the formulation of the Urban Innovative Action Programme: "Curing the Limbo - From apathy to active citizenship: Empowering refugees and migrants in limbo state".

After the initial profiling survey in 2016 the city is developing (June 2018), in partnership with PREMIS (an US NGOs), a privately funded ad hoc survey on migrants (including second generation) and refugees integration outcomes and ability to access services (health, housing, etc.) in the city. The survey will be conducted by 250 migrants/refugees who will carry it out through a mobile application and will involve a sample of approximately 3 000-4 000 migrants and second generation migrants. As a result, such work will complement AORI findings and support ACCMR Working Committees in monitoring and implementing the ACCMR integration strategy.

The national authority will take over the mobile survey after the conclusion of the one-year pilot programme. This will be the first experience of the National government with collecting data for migrant integration according to international indicators such as the Saragoza ones[15]. Other municipalities in Greece, through the newly established Cities Network, have also expressed interest in joining Athens' efforts and implement similar surveys on urban indicators on integration.

Block 4: Sectoral measures for migrant integration

Objective 9: Match migrant skills with economic and job opportunities

Greece struggles with high rates of unemployment, which make it challenging for Greek and migrant populations to find their way in the labour market. In November 2017, 20% of the general population was unemployed. This is a slight decrease from the 23% recorded in January 2017, still it remains the highest unemployment rate in the EU. Especially worrying is the high unemployment rate of young people under 25, which was 44% at the end of 2017 (EUROSTAT, 2018). In March 2017, only 7.2% of the registered job seekers were third country nationals and 1.8% were EU nationals in Greece (See Table 3 in Key data section).

In Athens, numbers even exceed national averages, where 51% of the population is registered unemployed. Further, the region of Attica (which includes Athens) has the second-largest relative difference across OECD countries between the average equalised disposable household income of the native-born population and migrants, reaching 69% (OECD, 2018).

Gaps in employment opportunities are a major concern for the city as well as all its residents in particular migrants groups who arrive with different willingness to stay in the country, skills and capacities.

Employment policy and labour market management is a national competence in Greece. The conditions for accessing the labour market are regulated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. The residence title specifies whether the person is allowed to work or not, 'work permits' are no longer issued. For instance, asylum seekers have access to the labour market immediately after receiving their "international protection applicant card". They are allowed to immediately work but cannot exercise independent economic activity (i.e. set up their own business), meaning they can only work as salaried/waged employees. Like other European countries, migrants in Greece tend to be over-represented in low skill jobs, they are often employed in the black market and work below the minimum wage (Papademetriou G. and Benton M., 2016). In addition, economic sectors that traditionally employed migrant workers (e.g. construction, etc.) were severely hit by the crisis, further reducing migrant employment perspectives.

Further, structural barriers such as lack of skills assessment and validation mechanisms, formal recognition of foreign professional qualifications hamper migrants' integration in the labour market.[16]

Unemployment services in Greece are managed centrally, by the Employment and Manpower Agency (OAED), which is also in charge of managing the ESF fund for unemployment. OAED, through its decentralised offices, distributes benefits to the beneficiaries, offers counselling to registered members and matches labour demand and offers, as far as possible under current economic conditions in which demand far exceeds offers. Everyone holding a work permit, can register with the system and enjoy national unemployment benefits on the same basis as nationals. All beneficiaries have access to universal unemployment benefits (EUR 400/month) if they have worked a certain amount of days for two consecutive years. Unemployment benefits last one year and three months (15 months). Registered members can also have sessions with a job counsellor and potentially access vocational training. Migrants can also be referred to Greek language classes (although this service was also hit by austerity cuts and no such classes are running for the time being).

At city level, the municipality took the initiative, in December 2016, to create the Job Centre, which is located on the premises of the Department of Social Solidarity and Health of the municipality. It is privately funded through the British-American Tobacco Company and offers training (IT skills, English language courses), counselling for employability and administrative support.

In an effort to reduce unemployment and offer opportunities for enhancing the employability of all groups, the Municipality of Athens implemented two actions through its development agency, the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA, Greek acronym 'EATA').[17] ADDMA implemented a project funded by the Region of Attica called TOPSA (Local Integrated Programs for the Support of Employment). The project offered employability training and counselling to 37 000 job seekers from 2012 until 2015. The programme was designed for all citizens of the city of Athens without specific reference to migrants, refugees or other vulnerable groups. Secondly, ADDMA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, also implemented the TOPEKO action in six projects from 2012-2015, which is an acronym for Local Actions for Integrating Socially Vulnerable Groups. All six projects aimed at the development of an integrated support plan to prepare socially vulnerable groups[18] to enter the labour market. Its goals were that participants secured employment upon completion of the project. The first five projects supported a total of 400 beneficiaries, of which 30% were migrants. The last one, exclusively addressed migrants.

Box 2.3. List of TOPEKO Projects in partnership with ADDMA

1. 'Co-working in the historic centre' (Budget: EUR 380 000).
2. 'Integration for All – PRE - ACTION' (Budget: EUR 450 000).
3. 'Creation of Social Enterprises for the Vulnerable Groups in the City of Athens' - 'More colour in our lives - changing the City' (Budget: EUR 350 000).
4. 'Developing Social Economy for the support and achieving an integrated inclusion of socially vulnerable groups in Attica' - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'CO- BUSINESS IN ATHENS' (Budget: EUR 276 000).
5. 'Bridging the gap - Solidarity and support for women - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'DIEXODOS' – it involved an integrated intervention (including career, legal and psychological counselling) to support social reintegration, job search and work placement for 70 women who have experienced violence and abuse (Budget: EUR 380 000).
6. Forum for Equal Integration - DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP 'ANTAIOS'. It supported 90 beneficiaries - third country nationals, who legally resided in Athens and who were at risk of social exclusion with a total budget of EUR 450 000. Six or seven people succeeded in securing employment. Most notably, a group of migrants managed to establish a cleaning services company and benefited by receiving advice from municipal representatives. For this project, ADDMA collaborated with NGOs active in the field of migrants' integration such as ASANTE (network of migrants from Africa) and MELISSA (network of migrant women) whose collaboration was crucial in disseminating relevant information to migrant communities.

Other initiatives are in place at the local level in particular to protect the labour rights of migrant workers. For instance, labour unions support migrants' employment protection and especially the Workers' Union (Ergatiko Kentro). Migrant associations have also been active in protecting and promoting labour rights: for instance, the Filipino Migrant Association advocated for a change in the regulation of the insurance policy for house workers (i.e. house cleaners, carers, etc.). As a result, house workers can now buy insurance for EUR 125/month, and there is greater pressure for employers to insure them. Other NGOs such as the Greek Forum for Migrants have also been active in advocating for migrants' labour rights and offering legal and psychological support to regular and irregular migrants alike.

In terms of business entrepreneurship this sector has been suffering due to tighter lending conditions for both nationals and migrants alike. Data from the Institute of the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Research demonstrate a small increase in migrant entrepreneurship, particularly among Albanians. Some migrant associations, such as the Filipino women's association, provided small loans to its members to start a business.

The Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants partners with the EU ERASMUS+ programme, which aims to assist small businesses to develop a multicultural approach leading to the employment for more migrants. They also participate in a Committee currently drafting the content of the job description of 'intercultural mediators', which could be a job outlet for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Objective 10: Secure access to adequate housing

Greece is peculiar in terms of housing as it has one of the highest rates of home ownership in Europe (72%) and Athens is no exception. Currently, there are a significant numbers of empty and uninhabited buildings in the City of Athens. According to a study carried out by the Centre of Entrepreneurship Support of the City of Athens in 2011, 609 058 apartments and houses were unoccupied (including, for sale, for rent or vacation homes) in the region of Attica (Greater Athens) out of a total of 2 118 743. In the past twenty years there has been an increasing move from the City Centre to the suburbs. Before 2010 this move was mainly due to the improvement of standards of living and Athenians seeking more comfortable housing solutions towards the coast. As economic conditions worsen many households have decided to leave the city centre where living standards have been deteriorating, mainly due to criminality and illicit trafficking.

This left uninhabited buildings for migrants and the vulnerable local population to squat. Some of the numerous empty housing units in downtown Athens belong to the municipality, private and faith-based organisations. The municipality is seeking investments for mapping this stock and refurbishing it.

Athens was among the cities of the OECD sample (including Glasgow and Gothenburg) rating segregation as a very high or highly unfavourable factor to integration (OECD, 2018).

Social housing was built mostly in the 1980s, when migration was not yet an important phenomenon in Athens. Also in the beginning, social housing was not particularly related to poverty in Athens – or Greece – as these projects materialised in the context of the welfare policy of the 1980s. It was mostly perceived by many as a fair and long-due recognition of the rights of equal participation of those excluded by the previous political system.

The Municipality of Athens operates a Social Housing Network for families, elderly people, pregnant women and individuals at risk of homelessness, which was launched in 2013. As is the case with all other services offered by the Municipality, all people with a residence permit enjoy equal access to support structures. Currently 50% of social housing beneficiaries are migrants. Yet, the foreign-born are over-represented in terms of applications representing around 90% of applicants. Currently, the Social housing network operated by the Municipality consists of four structures for a total capacity of 50 apartments. Of these, only one structure (9 apartments in total) is owned by the Municipality. The remaining three structures are operated via a partnership with foundations cooperating with the Municipality in the area of social housing (these are: Anthropinoi Anthropoi, the Chatzikosta Foundation and the Stegi Foundation). As the municipality cannot accept donations from individuals, the charities act as mediators for the city, channelling money and managing the social housing structures. The foundations lease housing units for three years from private landlords and the municipality covers maintenance costs. In order to be eligible for social housing, beneficiaries must prove that they are at risk of eviction, homeless or enrolled with the National Employment and Manpower Agency. Tenants are generally offered accommodation for six months; this is renewable for six more months. Besides accommodation, tenants are also offered health care, psychological support and legal aid through referral to the relevant municipal services in order to facilitate their social integration. Tenants also have access to the services of the Job centre. Overall, the entry into the social housing scheme provides integrated access to social services for vulnerable people, including migrants.

Currently, the Municipality is seeking to expand the Social Housing Network through a partnership with two semi-public associations owning a large number of empty apartments in the city, Girokomeio (Old People's Home) and Asylo Aniaton (Shelter for Chronic Diseases). Via the ITI (Integrated Territorial Initiative), a tool introduced for use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), of the European Structural Fund, the municipality plans to rent more apartments from these two institutions at a lower price and employ social entrepreneurship to refurbish the apartments. The allocation criteria will be decided by the municipality.

Specific structures for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Despite large empty housing blocks, Athens is one of the five large European cities (also Berlin, Glasgow, Paris and Rome) analysed in this study (OECD, 2018) that indicated that the lack of emergency reception facilities was a high, or very high, concern.

Box 2.4. Elaionas Open Hospitality Structure

In August 2015, in the midst of the refugee crisis, the municipality of Athens has set aside a site for the establishment of a model accommodation facility, 'Elaionas', covering 37 acres. Initially, Elaionas was designed as an emergency camp to host up to 700 people in 96 containers (8 people by container, who could stay up to three days). Today, 2 000 people live in Elaionas, mostly families and vulnerable people. In April 2017, the structure added a playground and a makeshift football pitch. The camp is co-managed by the Ministry of Migration and UNHCR, along with the Municipality of Athens, the Ministry of Education (providing education coordinators), the Greek Police (external security), the Centre for Control and Prevention of Diseases (Ministry of Health) and a number of national NGOs (such as PRAXIS, Elaia, Nostos) and International NGOs and organisations (UNICEF, IRC, SOS Children's Villages Greece) providing different services in Elaionas. The municipality runs the kindergarten and the social service office in the camp. Its employees have been appointed via a programme of the National Employment and Manpower agency (OAED) on 8-month temporary contracts.

According to the January 2017 census run by the Athens Observatory for Refugees and Immigrants of the Municipality of Athens in Elaionas, 45% of the total population were females while 55% are males, with the average of the Elaionas population being 20 years old. A large percentage of the Elaionas are nationals from Syria (42%) and Afghanistan (31%). See Annex D for distribution of nationalities.

Accommodation Scheme for Asylum Seekers

Following the Relocation agreement between EU Member States in September 2015, the city of Athens through its Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), along with other NGOs and social enterprises (Caritas, Praxis, etc.), was selected by UNHCR in 2016 to implement a EU-funded (ECHO) project to house 20 000 persons in Greece and 3 000 persons in Athens before relocation to another EU member state.

Today, ADDMA is renting 320 apartments of up to six beneficiaries per apartment to beneficiaries who in principle can stay up to three months. The city leases temporary housing for asylum seekers from private landlords though the ADDMA. The Municipality identifies the apartments, throughout the city, avoiding concentration in those areas with already high presence of migrant communities. As of April 2018, the scheme had hosted 4 127 beneficiaries in total. It was initially planned for EU relocation candidates but since the Relocation programme ended in September 2017, it has expanded to the most vulnerable asylum seekers and its name has changed from "Accommodation scheme for relocation candidates" to "Accommodation Scheme for Asylum Seekers" and today it is known as the "Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation". For distribution of nationalities in the housing scheme see Annex E. Recognised refugees in Greece can stay in the apartments for a period of six months. In general, there is no provision for housing once people have been granted asylum after these six months (Develop Athens, 2016). A specificity of the programme is that each family benefits from the support of 'triplets': a social worker, an apartment manager and

an interpreter who visit the families on a weekly basis. The triplets facilitate refugees' access to additional social services including welfare, education and counselling.

In April 2017, 49% of the total population of the Accommodation Scheme for Asylum Seekers were females while 51% were males, with the average age of the Relocation Scheme population being 19.8 years old. A large percentage of the Relocation scheme people are nationals from Syria (60%). Kurdish, Afghans, Iraqis and Palestinians are also represented in smaller numbers.

The project had to manage acceptance problems from the Greek nationals living in the same buildings; however, the staff engaged the neighbours via activities and dialogue and after some time neighbours started to connect with the refugees, in particular with the families.

Objective 11: Provide social welfare measures that are aligned with migrant inclusion

A significant increase in poverty and destitution levels in the city of Athens stretched the capacities of its welfare services. The number of people at risk of exclusion increased due to unemployment and the dramatic decline of salaries, pensions and family incomes. As a result, the number of beneficiaries of social services and protection grew at the local level, whilst resources from central transfers were reduced.[19]

The Municipality of Athens provides an extensive network of social services, which have expanded since 2010 when the economic crisis rocked the country. Local authorities in Greece do not have competence in designing social policy or the financial capacity to fund social and welfare benefits. However, since the introduction of Kalikratis in 2010, (see Objective 1), they gain competence as a front desk for social emergencies. Along with the distribution of central benefits (related mainly to health, disability, child protection and minor benefits with regards to housing) municipalities distribute the recently introduced Social Solidarity Income[20]. Migrants also have access to the Social Solidarity Income if they hold a five-year or student residence permit. In 2015, the Municipality adopted a social programme for 2015-2019 whose main services are described below. Based on a non-discrimination policy, all social and welfare services managed by the municipality are accessible to all citizens of Athens. Non-targeted policies have the advantage to avoid resentment among groups who have the same needs. On the other hand, a blanket-approach fails to distinguish language and cultural barriers that migrant groups face in accessing services. Capacity building (see Objective 6) can be strategic in balancing the risk of exclusion from universal services of those groups who face specific linguistic or cultural obstacles.

All services, centres and initiatives described below (i.e. KYADA services) (See Box 2.5), such as municipal health clinics and day care for children are available and accessible to all persons in need regardless of national or ethnic origin.

Box 2.5. Centre for Reception and Solidarity (KYADA)

A key structure in the social service network is the City of Athens Homeless Shelter established in 1999 as a legal entity under public law. In early 2005, it was renamed 'Centre for Reception and Solidarity of the City of Athens' (KYADA). KYADA is funded by the municipality (EUR 2.5 million per year adjusted to needs); additional funds are raised from private entities. KYADA is a municipal - yet autonomously run - structure: it has a president and a council that can take decisions without going through the municipality. KYADA benefits from permanent staff as well as fixed-term ones through external funding and staff appointed through the National Employment and Manpower Agency.

KYADA operates as a one-stop-shop for social emergencies offering services to all vulnerable groups including irregular persons. It provides shelter, collects and distributes food items, clothing and shoes. KYADA cooperated with public services like clinics, referring persons in need to the relevant public services or to the NGOs that are part of their networks (Medecins du Monde, Solidarity Now, etc.).

Beneficiaries are identified by its staff, others are referred to by social services, parishes, volunteers and collaborating agencies. When the centre started working in 2005, 70% of their beneficiaries were migrants, since the crises the ratio changed and now 50% have migrant origin and 50% are Greeks. In 2016, KYADA had 9 000 registered beneficiaries and 1 000 non-registered beneficiaries (family leaders and single people). This corresponds to an estimated support for a total of 25 000 people.

Among the services offered, we can list the following:

- From 2007 to 2016: Supermarket companies donated food and other products. Every six months, low-income families were chosen through a lottery, based on a set of socioeconomic criteria defined by the Municipality's Social Services. The beneficiaries were provided vouchers on a monthly basis in the 'Social Grocery Store'. Some 11 467 low-income families have benefited from the programme.
- In 2017 a new 'Voucher' programme was launched by KYADA in collaboration with the New Venture Fund (funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation): 50 single people, 50 two-person households and 350 families receive a pre-paid supermarket card, worth EUR 40-80. All citizens of the Municipality of Athens who were unemployed and lived below the minimum level of income (4.512 euros per year) were eligible to participate in the 'Voucher' programme.
- Since 2008, KYADA has operated the 'Social Pharmacy' programme, which provides drugs and other pharmaceutical items to uninsured citizens of the Municipality of Athens and currently offers its services to 3 000 users.
- Since 2009, 'KYADA' has operated a soup kitchen that distributes 800 meals twice a day. All citizens, legal migrants and undocumented migrants have access to this service.
- Since 2008, the 'Athens Market' programme has distributed new or slightly used clothes for free. The programme has about 2 000 beneficiaries.
- KYADA offers counselling, psychological support, social rehabilitation and reintegration to its beneficiaries either via its own staff, when possible, or by referring the beneficiaries to relevant national, municipal or NGO services.
- The 'Solidarity with the Family' social programme was first implemented in May 2012 in an attempt to combat poverty and social exclusion. Food items, cleaning and personal hygiene products are provided. Moreover, all beneficiaries of the

service have access to individual psycho-social support and counselling: 50% of beneficiaries are families with migrant origins.

- The 'Mutual Citizen Aid Hub' social programme was first implemented in July 2012 in an attempt to provide material support to vulnerable social groups. All distributed items are provided by the private sector and individual donations. Those who are not selected for services offered by the Social Grocery Store are automatically entitled to one bag of groceries per month, or two bags per month for large families, which are provided by the 'Hub'. The 'Hub' programme has 22 363 registered beneficiaries. The top two nationalities benefitting from its operation include Albanians (8 975) and Greeks (8 643 beneficiaries).
- KYADA operates a shelter owned by the municipality with 35 places. An additional 100 beds are paid for in hostels for old and homeless people for up to six months. 'KYADA' also operates two short-term shelters for homeless people. These structures have the capacity to host 212 people who, besides temporary accommodation, can access social services. Users of the service do not include irregular migrants as they must provide a health certificate (no transmittable diseases), a psychological assessment (no heavy psychological condition or addiction) and a certificate of criminal record.

Municipal Health Clinics

Although hospital and health services in general are a national competence, the Municipality operates and finances six health clinics providing primary health care and preventative care to all citizens, including uninsured citizens, legal migrants and irregular migrants. In 2013, the clinics were linked to the National Health System as far as prescriptions are concerned (which also covered uninsured citizens and irregular migrants). In 2015, 49 297 visits were recorded, approximately 8 000 visits of foreign nationals were recorded, more than half of which concerned visits of Albanian or Albanian-Greek citizens (4 671 visits) (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Nationality and number of visits of beneficiaries to the 9 Municipal health clinics in 2015

Nationality	Number of visits per year
Greek	41 477
Albania	4 176
Bulgarian	596
Albanian-Greek	495
Ukrainian	274
Armenian	215
Polish	211
Egyptian	199
Russian	130
Romanian	124
Other	1 400
Total	49 297

Source: Athens Municipality, Report on 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece'.

As of June 2017, two clinics (the Municipal Clinic in Kypseli and the Municipal Clinic in Patissia, both situated in areas of the city that suffered from the economic downturn and have a large migrant population), had implemented a pilot programme offering psycho-social support, legal advice, employability counselling and information on social

enterprise, in an effort to offer holistic support to the users of the service. Additionally, as of June 2017, starting from the municipal clinics, all municipal social frontline services will be connected electronically in order to avoid duplication of services and ensure a more individual/tailored response for users, using as identification the Social Security Number (AMKA). Further, the government started in July 2017 to operate 60 'TOMY' units – that is Local Health Units – providing primary health care, with a total number of 239 being operational by December 2017. The Municipality is currently trying to get recognition of Municipal Health Clinics as 'TOMY' facilities, whilst maintaining their operation under municipal auspices.

Volunteer services provided by migrant health practitioners who have been living in the city for a long time are another key element in migrant integration. To ensure health services in refugee camps in the city, doctors born abroad but who have graduated from a university in Greece, volunteer their healthcare services. Equally, foreign doctors operate for free in health clinics that are open during times that coincide with migrant working schedules. In particular these clinics address migrant women, many of whom are coming from eastern European countries and work as house-keepers or care takers in private houses and can only go to see doctors on weekends.

Within the framework of the ADDMA-UNHCR housing programme, ten doctors have been hired to serve in two municipal clinics (general practitioners, gynaecologists, paediatricians, psychologists and psychiatrists). Their services are provided to the refugees of the programme but also to other refugees in the city as well as Greek citizens.

Children Day Care

The Municipal Nursery of Athens was established in 1959 in an attempt to provide accommodation and support to orphans. In the early 1980s, the first Municipal nursery school was established, which operated under the auspices of Municipal Nursery of Athens. Currently, 77 Municipal nursery schools operate across the city under the management of the Municipal Nursery of Athens, where approximately 5 500 children from ages 6 months to 4 years old are hosted on a daily basis.

There is no special policy with respect to the access of migrants' children to day care facilities. All children of migrants residing in Athens legally are eligible for admission, depending on available places. In the past, legal resident status was required for both parents. This limited access to many children and some migrant associations (i.e. the Filipino Community) run their own nursery.

In an effort to transform day care facilities into meeting spaces for native and migrant families, the Athens Municipality implemented the programme 'Together' in a number of municipal day care facilities from April to June 2015 (see Objective 5) in the afternoons. Similar objectives were promoted through an EU-funded project implemented in 42 day care facilities from January 2015 to June 2016. Children and their parents were given the opportunity to participate in multicultural events. The aim was to create a meeting point for parents in day care facilities and facilitate access to pre-school. Some 2 050 native and migrant children benefited from the project, which was implemented in five Greek municipalities.

Moreover, municipal nursery schools also include psychological support and counselling, health, and social support services, which can potentially facilitate the access and life of migrant children in day care facilities. Nursery school staff is trained to identify the most severe cases of socio-economic hardship and can direct such cases to the relevant services

if deemed necessary. However, it should be noted that there is no special municipal policy/approach targeted to migrants with respect to dealing with obstacles in access to municipal day care services. Between 2014 and 2015, migrant children constituted 19.2% (1 267 children) of the total number of children (6 613 children) hosted in the 77 municipal nursery schools in Athens. The vast majority of them were from Albania (715 children). The percentage of migrant children has remained, more or less, stable in recent years: 2013-2014 (18.1%); 2012-2013 (20.8%). However, it appears to have dropped considerably compared to the 2011-2012 period, when the percentage of migrant children hosted in municipal nursery schools was 23.6%. This gradual decrease in the percentage of migrant children hosted in municipal day care could be linked to the fact that a large number of Albanians have left Greece since the beginning of the economic crisis. This is confirmed by the sharp decrease in the number of Albanian children hosted in municipal day care facilities since 2011: from 1 146 children in 2011-2012 to 715 children in 2014-2015, according to the Municipality of Athens.

Objective 12. Establish education responses to address segregation and provide equitable paths to professional growth

Education is a national competence in Greece as far as curriculum and appointment of teaching staff are concerned. Municipalities are only in charge of managing infrastructure. The Greek constitution guarantees the right of all children to education and according to the law, all children must attend school. During the 1990s, reception classes for migrant children were created in state schools (primary education only), whereas from 1996 onwards twenty-six multicultural schools (thirteen primary education schools and thirteen secondary education schools) were established across Greece. Despite the fact that these schools were conceived as a melting pot and as a point of creative convergence between natives and migrants, today the multicultural schools are overwhelmingly attended by migrant children only. One multicultural school still exists in Athens.

The refugee crisis and the closing of the so-called “Balkan Route” in March 2017, increased the presence of a large number of asylum seeking minors. Responding to the circumstances, the Greek state implemented two parallel systems: a) enrolment and attendance at regular schools with regular curricula (for children accommodated outside accommodation centres and facilities) and b) schooling in Facilities for the Reception and Education of Refugees (DYEP) for those in specific refugee accommodations. The introduction of the DYEPs aimed at meeting the need for a gradual educational integration of refugee and asylum seeker children in facilities of the Greek state or the UNHCR while preventing tensions and excessive burden on the national educational system. During 2016-2017, 32 DYEP centres operated in Greece within 115 schools with the contribution of 62 educational coordinators hired for this purpose. Children are transported to schools via buses operated by the IOM. In total, it is estimated that 2 800 refugee children attended primary and secondary education during 2016-2017. However, as the report of the Greek Ombudsman points out,[21] no DYEP has started operating in the Aegean islands despite the large number of children residing in the Reception and Identification Centres. The Ministry of Education has also drafted plans, to be implemented in the 2017-2018 school year, to open nursery schools inside the camps as well as a strategy entitled ‘15+’ to address the educational needs of those refugee children who are above the age of compulsory education. As far as Athens is concerned, pre-registration for primary and secondary schools for children living in off-site accommodation started in June 2017, ahead of the 2017-2018 school year.

For beneficiaries of the accommodation scheme for refugees and asylum seekers in Athens described in page 54 the organization of Greek and English language lessons is provided by a team of volunteers from a private Greek language learning foundation and the British Council. They also offer city tours as well as visits to museums and exhibitions; musico-kinetic education and story-telling for children in association with various private groups/institutions also fosters exposition to the Greek language. English lessons and creative learning for children takes place via the Open Schools programme (described below).

Greek language classes

There are no systematic Greek language courses at national or municipal level for the time being. From 2008 to 2010, the Kapodistrian University of Athens, via the NSRF fund ran Greek as a second language classes, open to all vulnerable social groups, including migrants. Between 2008 to 2011, the Ministry of Education and the General Secretary of Lifelong Learning and New Generation implemented the 'Odysseas' programme which funded 320 places for the learning of the Greek language, Greek history and Greek culture. The programme was designed to give the participants the necessary knowledge to reach the level required for the status of 'long term resident' and to participate in the relevant exams certifying this knowledge.

Due to a lack of public language classes, NGOs, charities, religious organisations or private providers fulfil the offer. In Athens different options are available. Volunteers from the Sunday School for Migrants, a well-established NGO, have offered Greek classes for more than a decade. Also, Greek language classes for adults are mostly run by NGOs like the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Melissa-Network of Migrant Women. Other NGOs providing services include the Greek Forum for Migrants or Elix, as well as migrants' associations, like the Pakistani and the Afghan associations.

Further, the initiative 'Open Schools'[22], which is funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, offers Greek language classes using state facilities such as schools in the Municipality of Athens, e.g. in the afternoons and at the weekend. In 2017-2018 the programme runs a variety of projects regarding refugee children (aged 6-17). They offer different classes for different age cohorts, focusing on the preparation of refugee children ahead of the coming school year. The Municipality ensures the space in public schools - whose infrastructure is the competence of the Municipality.

Notes

[1] www.apdattikis.gov.gr/%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%86%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7-%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%BD%CF%8E%CE%BD-%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%8E%CE%BD/.

[2] www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/greek_ombudsman_migrants_refugees_2017-el.pdf.

[3] From 2001 to 2010 municipal authorities had competences in the implementation of regularisation programmes and in matters related to migrants' documentation. Local government authorities were mediating agents: they forwarded applications for residence permits or renewal to the decentralised state administration located in the regional departments, residence permits still being issued by the competent national ministry (Ministry of Interior and Administrative Restructuring). Local authorities received a compensation of roughly 50% of the application cost.

[4] Migrant Integration Councils (MICs), the political organ are not to be confused with the Migrant Integration Centres that serve as service provision structures.

[5] http://www.arch.ntua.gr/sites/default/files/announcement/7684_/programma_koinonikis_politikis_2015-2019.pdf.

[6] www.accmr.gr/en/the-athens-coordination-center.html.

[7] In order to become a member immigrants need to represent an organisation or community, recognised either as a non-profit organisation or association. The criteria on the basis of which the City Council invites organisations and communities to participate in the MIC are based upon the size of the population of immigrant communities and the representation of communities from different geographical areas.

[8] DAEM (SA) focuses on the cooperation for the implementation of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) projects in the private and public sector, participation in European research and development programs and the promotion of its products and solutions to Municipalities in Greece and abroad.

[9] Absorption capacity represents the extent to which a country is capable of effectively and efficiently spending its Structural Funds allocation, and is expressed as a percentage of the total allocation.

[10] Not to be confused with the Migrant Integration Council described in Objective 7.

[11] https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/08/22/migrant-women-help-new-generation-of-female-refugee-leaders-in-athens.

[12] https://www.100resilientcities.org.

[13] http://solidaritycities.eu/

[14] www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/greek_ombudsman_migrants_refugees_2017-el.pdf.

[15] https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/eu-zaragoza-integration-indicators-italy

[16] Organisation Earth runs employment seminars in refugee camps. Soffa, a recently formed social fashion factory employing refugees, employs survivors of human trafficking and vulnerable unemployed Greek citizens.

[17] ADDMA was founded after the Kallikratis reform and the merger of the Athens Development Agency and the Tourism and Economic Development Agency. 99% of the company's shares belong to the Municipality, whist 1% belongs to local stakeholders. One of its main objectives is the management of the social crisis via initiatives against poverty and social exclusion.

[18] Defined by the Ministry as: long-term unemployed and unemployed over 50-years old, leaders of single-parent families, illiterate, mental health or addiction issues, disability, migrants, ex-convicts, the Roma and people disadvantaged because of linguistic or cultural particularities.

[19] According to a survey conducted by DIANEOSIS, the percentage of relative poverty in Greece was 21.9% in 2011, 23.2% in 2012, 23.6% in 2013, 22.1% in 2014 and 23.2% in 2015. The percentage of extreme poverty for the same period was 8.9% in 2011, 14.3% in 2012, 17.1% in 2013, 15.7% in 2014 and 15% in 2015, available on: www.dianeosis.org/2016/06/poverty_in_greece.

[20] The Social Solidarity Income was introduced by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity on the 01/01/2017. Access to the benefit (EUR 200 per month) is open to citizens whose income is below EUR 1 200 up to six months prior to the application; the benefits increase

by EUR 100 for each adult member of the household and EUR 50 for each minor of the household. Potential beneficiaries' income must be below EUR 1 800 for two-person households or for single-parent families, below EUR 2 100 for three- person households, below EUR 2 400 euros for four-person households, below EUR 2 700 for five- person households and below EUR 3 000 for six-person households six months prior to the application for the Social Solidarity Income. Those enrolled for the Social Solidarity Income could also have access to FEAD (the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived). Migrants have also access to the Social Solidarity Income if they hold a five-year or student residence permit. The Municipality is planning on linking the beneficiaries of the Social Solidarity Income to the social and welfare system of the Municipality so as to offer a more complete approach to the support and future integration of those most in need. The Municipality is projecting a number of 18 000 households applying for the Social Solidarity Income whereas the number for the national level is 700 000.

[21] www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/greek_ombudsman_migrants_refugees_2017-el.pdf.

[22] www.athensopenschools.gr/en/.

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Note

[1] This case study is based on data retrieved from the Municipality of Athens and its services collected through the OECD survey conducted for the purpose of this study; data from the National Statistical Agency; data from the 2016 report on 'Local Government and Migrant Integration in Greece', which canvasses the existing structures for migrants' integration within four municipalities in Greece, produced by the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy', an independent think-tank producing policy research; data from the 2017 survey conducted by the Observatory for Refugees and Migrants (a structure within the Municipality of Athens), data from the National Agency on Employment and Manpower; data from the Asylum Service; data from the 2017 survey on the attitudes of Greeks conducted by Dianeosis, an independent think-tank producing large surveys on topical issues. Finally, the evidence gathered during the OECD field visit to Athens from March 28 to 31st 2017.

Annex A. Decentralisation in Greece

'Kallikratis' Reform

The Law 3852/2010 'New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration' known as 'Kallikratis Project' entered into force in 2011 and it is considered as a major turning point in the reform process of the territorial, administrative and local government structures. It reduced the number of municipalities and communes from 1 034 to 325 municipalities. As such, municipalities gained in terms of capacity, even if this was not reflected by an increase in their fiscal flows (primarily due to the fiscal crisis of the Greek state) or by the expansion of administrative and political autonomy from the central state.

The 'Kallikratis Project' reform sought to rationalise resources and local spending by creating economies of scale. It also improved service delivery to citizens and enterprises at the local level through the implementation of new technologies and the establishment of the Ombudsman responsible to control the decisions of the local government. Also, 'Kallikratis Project' transformed the thirteen administrative regions into second tiers of the government with directly elected regional councils, as opposed to centrally appointed bodies. Between the local and the national level, have been established also seven Decentralised Administrations that are units of the central state in the region. They are not a level of local government but decentralised representations of the state.

The Decentralised Administrations assumed all those competences previously exercised by the former administrative regions that were not transferred to the local government, including competences related to migration services (which are now offered by the "one-stop shops" of the Foreigners & Immigration Services operating within the Decentralised Administrations). Since the Immigration and Social integration code these one-stop-shop assist third country citizens who reside within their territorial jurisdiction, throughout all the stages of the procedure, i.e. from lodging the application for a residence permit, to the acquisition of their biometrical data and the service of the decision or the residence permit, as per each case.

Annex B. Migration legislation reforms

'The first regularization programme to address illegal immigration was introduced in 1997 with Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997. By the end of this programme, 371 641 immigrants had been registered for a temporary residence permit (or white card), but only 212 860 went on to receive a permanent residence permit (green card). It is estimated that less than half of the immigrants living in the country were registered during this first regularisation programme. In 2001, the government passed a new law regarding the entry, residence, and naturalisation of immigrants in Greece (Law No. 2910/2001). This act created another opportunity for immigrants to legalise their status, provided they could produce proof of residence for at least a year before the implementation of the law. Law 3386/2005 on the entry, residence, and integration of immigrants was introduced in 2005 and included another regularisation programme. The law stipulated that immigrants who had lived in the country through 31 December 2004 could be regularised under the condition they could prove their entry into Greece before that date. It also made the procedure for the issuance of residence permits simpler than the 2001 programme and incorporated the relevant EU directives on family reunification (Council Directive 2003/86/EC) and long-term resident immigrants (Council Directive 2003/109/EC). […] Law 3536/2007 introduced some changes: It abolished the regularisation fee for children between the age of 14 and 18, it gave immigrants the opportunity to pay for up to 20 percent of the 200 days of social insurance contributions required (two-thirds of which is paid by the employer and one-third by the employee) in order to be eligible for regularisation and permit renewal, and it gave an extension for the submission of the required documents.' (Kasimis, 2012)

The Greek nationality is acquired by birth by children a) born to a Greek parent b) born in Greece as stateless or of unknown nationality and c) born in Greece to a foreigner also born in Greece (3rd generation immigrants). Foreign nationals may acquire the Greek nationality by naturalization after seven or twelve years (depending on the type of residence permit they own) of legal and permanent residence in the country. Special conditions, ie three years of legal and permanent residence, apply for EU citizens, spouses of Greeks with children, parents of Greek children, refugees and stateless people. For foreigners of Greek descent special law conditions are applied for their naturalization. Since July 2015 the right to Greek citizenship was extended to a wider range of permanent residents of the country, ie to foreign children that have been born and/or raised in Greece (2nd generation immigrants) and have attended the Greek educational system. Briefly the new provisions involve the acquisition of Greek citizenship due to a) birth and attendance of a Greek school in Greece b) (irrespective of place of birth) successful attendance of 9 classes of Primary/Secondary Education or 6 classes of Secondary Education in a Greek school in Greece c) graduation of a Greek University, under the condition of being a graduate of a Greek Secondary school.[1]

[1] http://immigration.gov.gr/web/guest/nomoi-metanasteusi

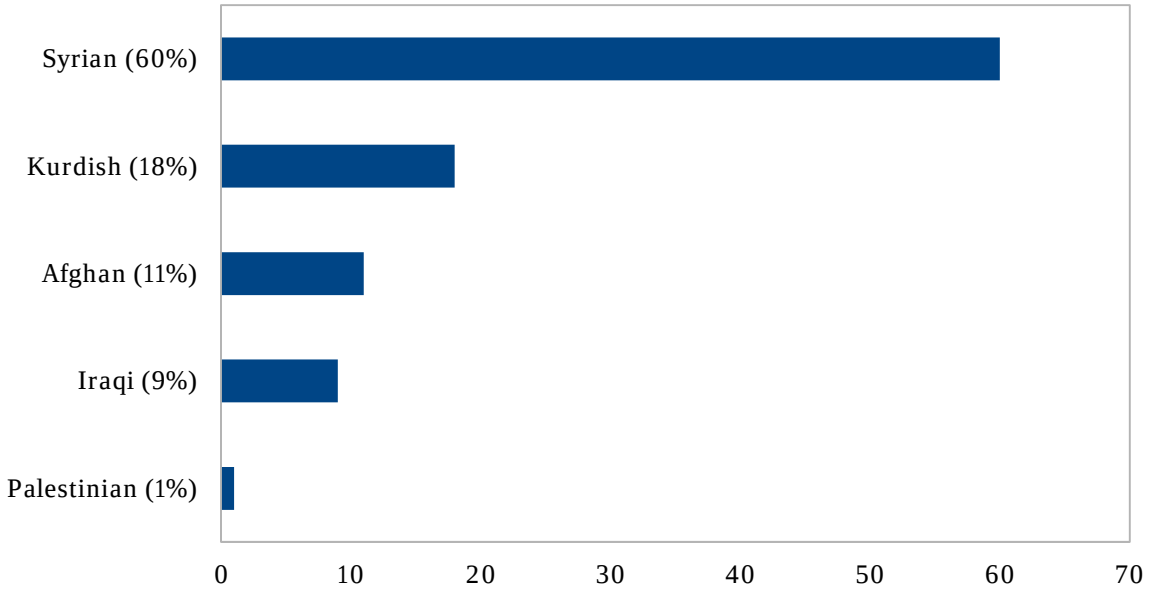
Annex C. List of participants in interviews with the OECD delegation in Athens

- **Mr. Lefteris Papayiannakis**, Vice Mayor for Migrants and Refugees;
- **Mr. Panayiotis Psathas**, Head of Department of Support and Social Integration for Migrants and Refugees
- **Mrs. Sany Paraskevopoulou**, Project Manager and **Maria Malapetsa**, Project Coordinator of the Relocation housing programme run by the Athens Development Agency (EATA) in cooperation with the UNHCR
- **Mrs. Maria Stratigaki**, Vice Mayor for Social Solidarity
- **Mrs. Antigone Kotanidis**, Advisor to the Mayor of Athens on international affairs and migration policy
- **Mrs. Despina Bolia**, Responsible for Social Housing, Municipality of Athens
- **Mrs. Eleni Katsouli**, KYADA, Director of the Centre for Reception and Solidarity, Municipality of Athens
- **Mr. Giorgos Keranis**, EATA, Special Advisor Social Entrepreneurship

- **Representatives**, General Secretariat for Migration Policy, Ministry for Migration Policy: **Konstantinos Kintis**, Director General; **Fani Keramida**, Social Integration Directorate, Head of Unit for Interculturalism & Sensitisation; **Michalis Kosmidis,** Migration Policy Directorate, Head of Unit for European & International Migration Policies; **Angeliki Grammatikopoulou**, Migration Policy Directorate, National Delegate at the OECD Working Party on Migration.

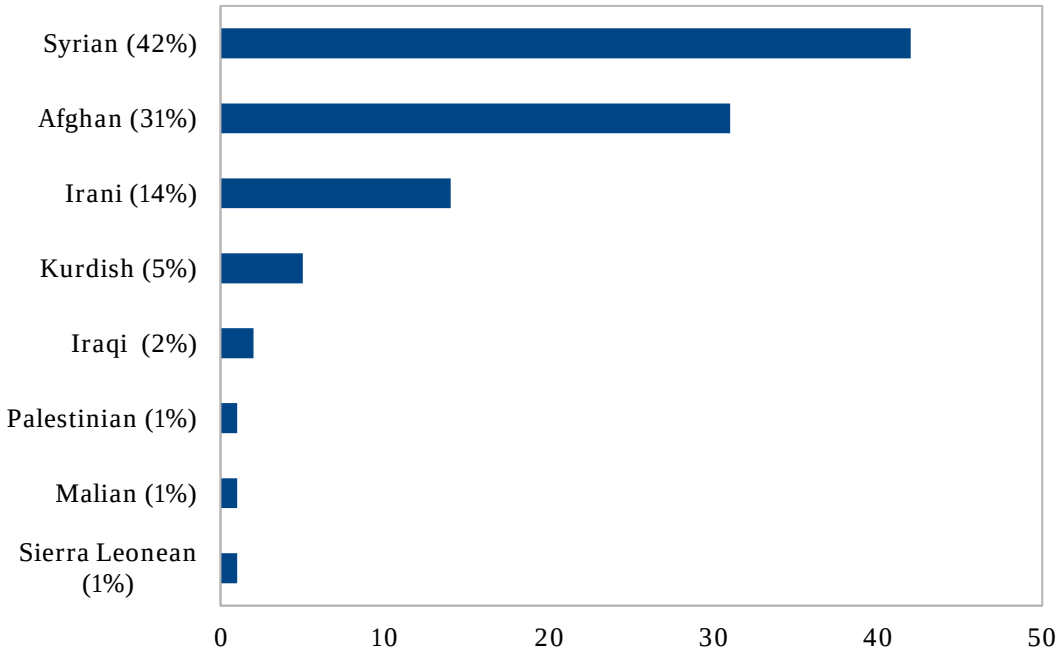
- **Anthi Karaggeli**, Director of First Reception Service, Ministry for Migration Policy
- **Representative**, Ministry for Employment (job market and labour related issues)
- **Representative EKKA**, National Centre for Solidarity (focus on unaccompanied minors)
- **President or General Secretary**, GSEVEE, Hellenic Confederation of Professional, Craftsmen and Merchants (job market and labour related issues)
- **Interview with the President of Athens Workers' Uni**on (EKA) (Georgios Mylonas)
- **Representative**, Greek Forum for Migrants (advocacy since 2002)
- **Representative**, Greek Forum for Refugees
- **Representative**, Pakistani Community
- **Mr. Kazim Rooish**, Community Afghan Immigrants and Refugees in Greece

Annex D. Nationalities hosted in Elaionas Open Hospitality Structure as of January 2017



Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

Annex E. Nationalities in relocation scheme



Source: Observatory for Refugees and Migrants of Municipality of Athens.

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(85 2018 15 1 P) ISBN 978-92-64-30410-9 – 2018

Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Athens

Migrants, including native-born children with migrant parents, account for 23% of Athens' population (664 046 people), while the number of refugees and asylum seekers has rapidly increased since 2015 and is currently estimated at 18 000. To respond to the refugee inflow, Athens developed bold and innovative initiatives, often beyond their direct responsibilities, and sought supra-national and non-state sources of funding (i.e. Stavros Niarchos Foundation, British American Tobacco, etc.). This emphasis on reception and integration of newcomers is the result of strong political will and cooperation with non-state actors, in line with the city's broader priorities since 2010 including anti-discrimination and improving equal access to social services. Integrating newcomers through jobs is particularly challenging given the high unemployment rate that Greece has experienced. In addition, newcomers often have the desire to continue their journey towards northern European countries, reducing their incentives to integrate and learn Greek.

While identifying various innovative practices, the OECD case study of Athens highlights the need for more reliable sources of financing and dialogue among levels of government. Data on migrant integration at the local level would support more evidence-based national, regional and local policy making.

Consult this publication on line at ***https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304116-en***.

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Co-funded by the European Union

ISBN 978-92-64-30410-9
85 2018 15 1 P