



ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN GREECE DURING THE PAST DECADE (2000-2010)

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Setting the scene

The pressures to migrate from the peripheral to the core countries are augmenting both on the supply and demand sides. On the supply side rampant political and economic crises along with the lack of prospects for a better life force people to move. As a result and as far as Greece is concerned this surge of immigration especially during the course of the past decade has brought Greece before a difficult and demanding situation that is now imperative to be dealt with by all parties concerned.

While reflecting on migration one can state that Greece, after the collapse of the socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, saw a change from its traditional role as a country of origin to a destination or transit country¹. It is Greece's geographical position at the fringes of Europe and its porous frontiers that make it a

main gateway for migration towards EU. While located in Southern Europe and on the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, Greece shares land borders with Albania, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Greek land borders extend to 1,170 kilometers most of which are in mountainous areas. Greece's coastline measures 15,000 kilometers, 8,000 of which are in the Aegean Sea, making this the largest coastline of mainland Europe. Given the above parameters, policing and monitoring the sea as well as land borders is a task beyond the capabilities of the Hellenic state.

Furthermore, it should be noted that most of those immigrating to Greece or the EU illegally every year have usually been assisted in some way by organized criminal groups controlling, among others, human trafficking between Central, South Asia and EU through Turkey and Greece. These organizations are increasingly becoming involved with the facilitation of weapons and drug smuggling as well. Despite the efforts to comply with the UN Trafficking Protocol², Greece remains a transit and destination country for women and children, specifically forced prostitution. As far as men and children are concerned, it is reported that they are mainly trafficked for the purpose of forced labor³.

After more than two decades of being a "host" to immigrants, legal and illegal ones, Greece has displayed a rather insufficient immigration policy that lacks determination and effectiveness, having a rather reactive than proactive or warning nature. The main problem is that policies tend to be restrained only to efforts of solving fragmentally the causes of illegal immigration and human trafficking, thus being apt to lead to explosive social unrest in the future with the intensification of a global culture of fear for current and next generations alike. Therefore, today, more than ever, Greece is in need of a proactive immigration policy which will foresee and provide the Greek community with effective guidelines concerning the entrance and the facilitation of illegal immigrants in coordination with the EU such as the presence of FRONTEX in the northern region of Thrace and NE Aegean Sea.

Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration seen as one of the top security and social issues in the country has to be dealt with before dire consequences make their appearance and threaten the social stability and cohesion of the country. However, in order to solve a problem one has to fully understand the roots and causes of the problem. Thus, as in the past, a complex set of factors and forces are pushing and pulling migration to and from Greece.

As mentioned before, after the fall of socialist regimes across Europe, Greece has experienced an unprecedented inflow of immigrants, mostly illegal. The highest number of illegal immigrants come from neighboring Albania while, additionally, a large number also originates from Bulgaria, Romania and increasingly the MENA and South Asian region⁴. This is a multifaceted augmentation owing to a number of contributing factors.

Firstly, due to its geographical position, Greece is the first EU country that Asian illegal immigrants enter while heading towards Europe. However, it should be noted that illegal immigration routes have been experiencing significant geographical shifts as observed and presented by Frontex⁵. Thus, the aforementioned routes shifted from western into the eastern Mediterranean. For instance, during 2010 there was an abrupt increase in detections of illegal immigrants crossing the land borders between of Greece and Turkey (47,700)⁶. As a result, Greece is located at the end of a transit zone where globalised illegal immigration takes place. Furthermore, being a member of the Schengen Treaty contributes to the increase of illegal immigrants given the possible scenario of easily and freely entering any other country member of the Schengen Treaty.

In an overall view, it must be noted that there are three distinctive ways for immigrants to enter Greece illegally:

1. A significant and continuous flow of illegal immigrants is coming from neighboring Albania. It is not hard to imagine that a 247-kilometre common frontier in a mountainous area can only facilitate the procedure of illegal and most importantly undetected crossing over to Greece.
2. Another weak point with a view to the entrance points constitutes the Greek northern borders. It is people from the Balkans and Eastern Europe that frequently choose that point in order to enter Greece illegally. However, it is worth noting that the number of Balkan illegal immigrants has been declining after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU in 2007. This is due to the fact that ever since the aforementioned accession nationals from those countries have the right to enter Greece freely and legally.
3. Finally, Turkey has now become the primal gate to Greece and Europe both by land through the Thracian Greek-Turkish borders as well as the vast sea borders where patrolling and control remains a problem.

Dublin II

Estimating the phenomenon of migrants who enter a country in an irregular or clandestine manner (inflow of illegal immigrants over a given period) is inherently problematic as, by its very nature, it concerns unobserved events and undocumented people. Therefore, in order to curb this problem and thus detain and control the growing influx of illegal immigrants that is reaching crisis proportions, it was decided that intervention measures needed to be implemented. As a result in 1999 a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) was created by the European Union. Its main objective was the adoption of common asylum procedures and uniform status for refugees for all EU countries. Given the fact that all illegal immigrants have the right to apply for protection as refugees⁷ and as the distinction between a refugee and an asylum seeker is so hard⁸, the above system was regarded as a rather imperative measure.

Moreover, Dublin II categorises the criteria and the mechanisms that will determine which Member States will be responsible for examining an asylum application filed by a third-country national. The general trend is that the Member State in which an asylum seeker first sets foot is to be responsible.

Although this procedure was primarily adopted in an attempt to diminish the phenomenon of “asylum shopping” by refugees what happens in theory does not apply in practice as well.

Actually, illegal immigrants arrested in Greece are being digitally fingerprinted. That means that their fingerprints are stored in the Europe wide “EURODAC” database⁹. As a result, EU countries can examine right away, while accessing an asylum application, whether the illegal immigrant claiming asylum has been in Greece (or any other EU country) before. Under “Dublin II” rules immigrants must be returned to the “first country” of the EU that they entered. In other words, people who have been fingerprinted in Greece but have been arrested in another EU country will be deported back in Greece.

However, it must be noted that many of the illegal immigrants entering Greece prefer to seek asylum in another EU country and only “use” Greece as a passage point towards the European Union. Keeping that in mind, it has been reported that some of them go to great lengths in order not to be fingerprinted in Greece. Such lengths can even be described by attempts to burn off one’s fingerprints¹⁰.

Furthermore, it must be noted that “Dublin II” arrangement proved to be rather insufficient with a view to Greece’s case for two main reasons:

- While Dublin II arrangement apparently sets the bases for regulating a rather chaotic phenomenon, in fact it constitutes a convenient way for the EU countries which are not in the front line of the illegal immigration issue to deal with the problem. As a consequence, asylum seekers are transferred back to Greece which in 2010 undertakes the heavy burden to cope with 90% of all illegal immigrants entering into the European Union.
- Another flaw of the Dublin II arrangement is the fact that it does not take into consideration that there are not equivalent standards and practices of protection of asylum seekers in all EU member states. As a matter of fact, Greece possesses one of the lowest refugee recognition rates. For instance, in 2009 from a total of 29,501 applications that have been examined only 0,04% have been accepted¹¹.

Readmission agreements

One can understand that this remains a chaotic situation despite the efforts made in order to safeguard the frontiers of the European Union. Additionally, it is more than apparent that Greece cannot deal with this turmoil on its own. Therefore, Greece is in need of help coming from both the countries situated on the other side of its common frontiers and the international community. As far as third-country nationals are concerned, many governments display a rather reluctant behavior towards the act of agreeing to accept their nationals back. In an effort to deal with this behavior, ever since 2001 Greece has signed a number of bilateral agreements with countries such as Poland, Romania, Lithuania and Slovakia for immediate deportation and re-admission.

It is interesting, however, to underline one particular Re-admission Protocol. The Re-admission Protocol signed between Greece and Turkey in 2001 which was put in action in 2002. Under the terms of the Protocol, each party can inform the other party about the presence of illegal immigrants coming from its territory within a period of fourteen days. This clause applies to illegal immigrants who are nationals of either of the parties that signed the Protocol or they are third-country nationals. After being informed, the parties are obliged to accept the return of these people. Nevertheless, as the agreement was not properly implemented it had rather grave consequences. Within the period of 2006 and 2009 Turkey was requested to examine 52,618 re-admission cases, only 5,902 of which accepted. In fact, the number of the immigrants who actually returned to Turkey was far smaller¹². On the

other hand, Turkey has asked Greece to readmit 4,618 illegal immigrants according to a report by the Greek police force¹³. Greece has accepted none of the aforementioned requests.

Taking into consideration Turkey's behavior towards the bilateral protocol, one can realize the reluctance of other countries dealing effectively with the problem as well as the magnitude of the problem itself.

Implications

The aforementioned situation has resulted in a conflict and national security threat that seems to be impending over Greece. Direct consequences aside, on the size and structure of a country's population, both for the country of origin and the host country, there are numerous other effects of immigration that need to be diligently investigated. The process of evaluating the effects of illegal immigration can be set in a larger social context where it can be expressed through a vigorous concern about the social security system.

Therefore, one can observe that the impact of illegal immigration on the Greek society and economy can include:

Racism and Xenophobia

While reflecting on the relationship between the Greek society and the immigrants it cannot be denied that it can be characterized as thorny to say the least. It is generally believed that Greece has always been an ethnically homogeneous society, a largely used statement in an effort to justify or at least try to explain the emergence of xenophobia as well as the racism-related attacks and incidents. Certain retaliatory incidents of social unrest have dichotomized the Greek public opinion in the past while the Greek society remained for several years conservative as well as split on the issue that has now become a reality, mostly accepted as far as European immigrants are concerned. Hence the true aspects of the problem lay elsewhere. It is irrefutable that in Greek territories, the coexistence of other ethnicities – Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Albanian – was a common phenomenon¹⁴. It was after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that the Greek orthodox religion and the Greek language became the pillars of the New Greek identity. The main objective for the small Greek state was an irredentist policy of annexing all the Greek speaking territories. By inventing thus a New Greek identity, the problem of belonging and social exclusion for non- Greeks was inevitable. Also,

one would expect that a population of a traditional emigrating nation would be widely tolerant and understanding towards ethnic diversity as well as the political and economic immigrants seeking to better their personal life to a basic level. Undoubtedly, the media have sensationalized certain incidents in order to accentuate the profile of the “criminal” illegal immigrant. Such an incident was the hijacking of two buses by a Greek Albanian resulting in the death of a Greek passenger (1999)¹⁵

Criminality (Ghettoization)

That brings us to the next aspect of the effects of illegal immigration. Although, it was based on characteristics overly underlined in order to fulfill a certain cause, one cannot deny the link between the increase of illegal immigration and the augmentation of criminality. The unprecedented and uncontrollable inflow of large numbers of illegal immigrants to Greece has created, if not intensified, the creation of zones of increased criminality in the centre of Athens as well as several towns and cities around Greece including major ports such as Piraeus and Patra.

As far as Athens is concerned, these ghettos and “no-go areas”¹⁶ are situated in the heart of the city. The situation, in terms of safety can become, especially during the night rather intimidating.

As the statistical data on the Police website show, criminality is dire and incidents of riots are commonplace in these areas. This is due to the fact that immigrants contribute significantly to the raise of criminality by committing street crimes, petty theft as well as serious crimes such as rapes and homicides¹⁷. As for the identity of the illegal and legal immigrants, according to a confidential Police Report 42 criminal organizations from Albania operate in Greece and hence being responsible for a substantial part of the imported criminality, while latest years have seen a sharp increase of the activities of illegal immigrants from central, south Asia, Africa and the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region¹⁸.

Unemployment

By general belief, illegal immigration can have nothing but negative effects on the labour market. Many Greeks believe that illegal immigrants take the jobs of Greeks, thus contributing to the country’s increasing unemployment rate. However, if one takes a closer look at the actual facts and trends of immigration they can understand that this is hardly the case.

Most studies based on a wide variety of data sources demonstrate that immigrant labour is complementary to rather than substitute for that of Greek nationals. Moreover, many theoretical approaches on the impact of illegal immigrant support the same idea by maintaining that the importation of unskilled labor in the country raises, in the short-run, the marginal product of capital and skilled labor while diminishes the marginal product of the native unskilled labor¹⁹.

Therefore, it can be easily assumed that “grosso modo” the effect of immigrant employment on the economy is not negative. For Greece, immigration has favoured the employment and income of the more qualified and more disciplined section of the Greek labor force due to the fact that those more qualified can more freely climb the professional ladder and occupy positions of higher responsibilities as immigrant labor is being the only source of labor supply for a large proportion of producers.

Muslim Fundamentalism

After 2001 Greece was found in a unique and peculiar situation especially after the events in Afghanistan and the crises in several places in Central, South Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA). According to the Muslim Association of Greece (MAG) the current number of legalized Muslims is estimated to be around 850,000 – 1,000,000²⁰. However, it must be noted that there is usually disarray as far as the actual numbers and the composition of the Muslim communities are concerned due to the fact that official censuses with a regard to immigrants have only started recently (2001). A news article states that there are 500,000 certified Muslim immigrants in Greece of which almost 350,000 live in and around Athens²¹.

Although, Greece does not seem to have a particular problem with Muslim fundamentalism, a State Department Report on terrorism clearly raises awareness on the matter²². As described in the report, there is a great concern that Greece could be used as an EU entry point and a traverse route for potential terrorists from North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia traveling towards Europe and the United States. Indeed, with the increase of numbers of illegal immigrants originating from radical Islam thriving countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan, the possibility of potential extremist recruits constitutes more of a reality.

In fact, it is worth noticing that in Greece a fairly large number of organizations related to the Muslim culture have been operating over the past decade. In particular, outside Thrace where local organizations and mosques have existed for years while being funded/financed by Turkey, there are now a few official and pan-Hellenic Muslim associations in the form of NGOs. At the same time, there is a

significant number of local-based “centers” usually around private mosques or “cultural centre” organizations²³.

Furthermore, one can assume that the immense inflow of illegal immigrants in the country was due to the fact that Greece was intended as a “safe haven” for organization using the country for supporting operations as well as recruitment of Muslim illegal immigrants. According to several reports about the future of registered immigrants in Greece, it is indicated that numbers of those immigrants (mainly Muslim) are above 2,150,000 people²⁴. Taking into consideration that the ethnic Greek population remains largely the same during the past decade one can only realize the eminent problem and the need of monitoring of the situation.

Human Trafficking

According to the 2005 Human Security Report released by the Hyman Security Centre, human trafficking is “so widespread and so damaging to its victims that it has become a cause of human insecurity” on a global scale²⁵. Therefore, arguments for enhancing measures of prevention, protection and prosecution in the struggle against human trafficking suggest a multifaceted and integrated approach based on principles of human security such as addressing freedom from want and freedom from fear. Responses to human trafficking in practice, however, have mainly been channeled through an emphasis on enhanced border control and law enforcement, a rather ineffective, if not flawed, approach.

As coherently articulated in the UN annual report (1994) as a part of the United Nations Development Program²⁶, one cannot argue that the concept and meaning of human security is still contested, given that it is still at an early stage of development. As a matter of fact, it remains amorphous as a concept and it is not yet well articulated in the form of definitions. Moreover, it must be noted that proponents of the human security agenda generally coalesce around the idea that the definition of human security and consequently that one of human trafficking, is contested in at least two dimensions.

The first concerns its relative breadth. To some, the definition should be bounded by threats constituted through direct physical violence. To others, it extends beyond the scope of physical safety to issues such as human dignity and the root causes of conflict, many of which are attenuated from actual conflicts themselves²⁷. On the other hand, the debate is further complicated by the broad swath of interdisciplinary approaches employed in the study of human security, coupled with the need to bridge the work of academic and policymakers. This creates a potential cleavage between *practitioners* and *academics*. Above all, however, it concerns the integrity

of both the civil society as well as the character of the democratic system in efforts to reduce vulnerabilities caused by exogenous factors such as unanticipated crises that are targeted at civilian populations.

In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars during the course of 1990s South Eastern Europe, and especially the Western Balkan Region²⁸, can now be viewed as an emerging nexus point in the trafficking of persons into the European Union. These people, mainly women, come from both within the region of Western Balkans and from other areas of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union²⁹. As reported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) by 2001 the area of Balkans had emerged as a significant region in the trafficking of women and children to Western Europe³⁰.

According to the 2006 US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report it is estimated that each year 600,000 to 800,000 people (men, women, children) fall victims of international human trafficking worldwide. In an effort to gain insights into the patterns of human trafficking, it is worth noting that internal trafficking³¹ claims an estimated additional 4 to 27 million people³².

One might wonder about the origins of all the people victimized in the worldwide human being trade. Commenting on the matter, the TIP Report initially designated Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and FYROM as primarily countries of transit as well as of destination; Albania, Serbia and Montenegro (and Kosovo) were characterized as primarily countries of source and transit while Greece was reported to be a country of transit and destination.

There are many characteristics that differentiate today's migration trends from previous ones during the 20th century. In the European as well as the Greek case two of them attract the most attention: the illegal status as well as the ever growing number of female immigrants. It is irrefutable that illegality and clandestine status usually lead to trafficking of immigrants.

As described in an analysis of trafficking in Persons on Europe by the United Nations office on drugs and crime³³, Europe's connection to human trafficking is threefold: i) most of Europe constitutes a destination for victims of trafficking, ii) some countries are major origin countries of human trafficking and last but not least iii) domestic trafficking is prevalent in many of not all countries³⁴.

Having that in mind, it is a commonplace that immigrants often pay large amounts of money in order to be transported into wagons or lorry trucks, ships or even small boats, a process in itself a serious ordeal for the illegal immigrants. Many among those immigrants have even lost their lives in an effort to approach European soil. Most of them have been seriously injured or have died while trying to reach Greece,

Italy and other countries of the European South. Irrefutable proof constitutes the numerous wrecked ships in the Ionian and the Aegean Sea. At the same time, Greece's case reports are denouncing the death of many Asians in their attempt to cross the mine fields situated in the Northern border of Greece with Turkey and Bulgaria³⁵.

It is essential to keep in mind that official statistics probably over-represent incidents which are more easily detected by the criminal justice system³⁶. This is clearly the case when considering both the profile of the victims and the forms of exploitation. Sexual exploitation is more likely to be more easily detected than any other form of exploitation. This is due to two factors: firstly, over the past years great emphasis has been placed on sexual exploitation via awareness campaign and the focus of legislation. Secondly, forced labor as a form of human trafficking constitutes a recent inclusion in terms of national legislation³⁷.

With this caveat in mind we can see that from the number of illegal immigrants in Greece (estimated around 600,000 the least) half of them are women³⁸. Consequently and given the above data female trafficking is an essential parameter of immigration in Greece. Therefore, it needs to be thoroughly examined in its social context in order to be fully understood.

While migrant women used to follow men to the destination country nowadays this pattern has been altered as women recently have been initiating migration due to political and economic reasons. Once again Greece has become a traverse point as well as one of the major destination countries in relation to female trafficking, mainly due to its strategic geographical position. The patterns and trends of female trafficking usually lead to feminized illegal immigration and to a greater extent to sex/adult entertainment industry. To grasp the concept of female trafficking we can look at the description of trafficking by the International Organization of Migration as "any illicit transporting of migrant women and/or trade for economic or personal gain"³⁹. The extent of the phenomenon in Europe can be described by the fact that over 4 million women are displaced from their countries in order to participate in the booming sex industry and 70 to 80% of these women come from Eastern Europe. What is more, a great percentage of these women are underage.

Moreover, as mentioned before, while Greece is being a destination and transit country, nearly 800,000 people are trafficked yearly across her borders (Ibid note 2) protection project). The victims can be identified in the face of women originating from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, as well as that of minors mainly from Albania (Ibid note 4). It must be noted that both minors and women are intended to enter the world of forced prostitution when trafficked. At this point, however, we must take into consideration that although it is portrayed as a phenomenon affecting

foreigners, human trafficking in fact is mainly “domesticated”. Consequently, a large part of the countermeasures that have been implemented (victim identification in irregular migration cases, awareness raising campaigns on work abroad, training of Embassy and consulate personnel, customs efficiency and others) are not sufficiently and in a position to address this form of trafficking.

Furthermore, it must be stated that there is a great lack of statistical data concerning female trafficking due to the fact that these women are illegal immigrants and usually the only available data is that relating to their deportation by the Greek authorities. Moreover, it must be stated that only a small fragment of these women (23%) know beforehand that they are going to be engaged in the sex industry⁴⁰. As for the rest of them, they are usually recruited by members of international Mafia gangs in the promise of a better future and a well paid job. They are hired as entertainers or strippers.

It is noticeable that upon their arrival, these women are stripped of all their legal documents hence they are deprived of any form of protection against a potential arrest by the police. As a consequence, they are deported as undesirable foreigners. In such a case of a deportation, it is usual that these women do not reach their homeland as armed members of the Mafia enter the trains in which these illegal women are, before the police and within 48 hours they return to Greece or they are sold to other traffickers in the Balkans⁴¹. As described in a survey that was conducted in Athens, it was found that a great percentage of these illegal women and girls had no inkling of their whereabouts at the time or even where Athens is. At the same time, 50 % of them had lost track and sense of time⁴².

Another important characteristic of trafficking and prostitution in Greece is that of hierarchy of services on offer, both in relevance with the nationality of the victim and their working space. The clientele generally prefer tall, blond and slim Russians, Ukrainians and Poles. On the contrary, Albanians and filippinos are at the bottom of the sex preference rank. The former are more expensive and found in clubs and massage parlors while the latter prostitute themselves in the streets.

One question emerges effortlessly on one’s mind: Which are the actual measures and the extent of official help to those women, girls and children who fall prey to international crime gangs in the hope of a better future? In Greece’s case, trafficking cannot be punished given the fact that trafficking is by and large and wrongly equated with smuggling and there is no legislation relating to the matter. The importance of the female trafficking has been seriously undermined and overlooked in terms of combating the problem. In fact, it is indicative that the United Nations Convention concerning the Aberration of Trade in Human Being has not been ratified⁴³. Additionally, the Ministry of Public Order has claimed the creation of a

special office to deal with trafficking. However, such an office was never created⁴⁴. Moreover, as denounced by The Human Rights Watch very few cases go to court⁴⁵. In fact, instead of being used as witnesses, the victims are charged with prostitution without a proper license, thus being deported in spite of the fact that procurers strip the victims of all their documents.

Another outstanding fact is that Greek state officials have been actively involved in the trafficking business over the past decade if not over the past twenty years. As a matter of fact, it was discovered that employees of the Greek consulate abroad have been facilitating the issuing of documents allowing both procurers and traffickers to obtain the Greek nationality hence being able to work “legally” in Greece⁴⁶. In addition, it is also under the wing of the police that trafficking networks function, in exchange, of course, of large amounts of money. This is a phenomenon so frequent that in 1998 it led to the dismissal of the Minister of Public Order⁴⁷.

Before concluding, we must take a closer look to the response, regarding the matter of female trafficking and exploitation, coming from the Greek society. The Greeks have always dealt with prostitution by regarding it as a “male vice” that it is to be satisfied. It is irrefutable that until recently there was a significant differentiation between women with whom men satisfy their sexual needs – prostitutes – and women with whom they create families. However, it must be noted that the number of the immigrant women who are sexually exploited is highly underestimated by most of Greeks. This is due to the fact that a large number of Greeks is under the impression that these women happen to be employed in the sex industry rather than exploited.

Conclusion

Illegal immigration, including human trafficking, is but an element of the larger problem of organized crime and its pernicious consequences should not be lightly taken. It is important to make a significant distinction as far as the perspectives of illegal immigration and human trafficking are concerned. In other words, although human trafficking is regarded as a repulsive branch of organized crime that receives almost universal moral condemnation, illegal immigration is understood because of the economic and humanitarian motives involved in them. The reason for this is no other than the fact that in human trafficking the focus is on the smuggler who is a criminal benefitting financially not only from the act of smuggling and trafficking but also from the “end use” of the victim. On the contrary, an illegal immigrant is only a person who wants to improve his life, albeit by means defined as illicit by governments. Yet human trafficking and illegal immigration are interrelated in a paradoxical way. More specifically, the problem is that the more strictly the laws of

immigration against the illegal entrants are enforced the more sinister forms of criminality are used in order to overcome the barriers in the way of making a profit.

As we have noticed, given the trends of illegal immigration and human trafficking and the current situation in the country, Greece has to come to a state that must confront a problem that has gone largely unnoticed, if not ignored, over the past two decades. The 1990's have been a testing period for the Greek state, which, to our disappointment, has proven to be unprepared to accept and receive the massive inflows of immigrants coming to Greece. The policies adopted seem to be greatly influenced by northern European models that are characterized by strict controls and regularization. However, in Greece these policies were applied with a rather disrespectful regard to human rights of the immigrants resulting in a modernization of immigrant policies completely devoid of humane character.

Therefore, given the background and the historic as well as the geographic position of Greece, the future remains uncertain. Nonetheless, one can stay assured that immigration is not a temporary phenomenon dependent upon exogenous factors, but a global reality which greatly affects Greece as well. As a result old norms and perspectives of both the Greek political establishment as well as the society at large need to be evaluated and examined on a new basis in order for new and long-term strategies to be formed and put in action. Otherwise, the problem risks to be expanded deeper into the often conservative yet rapidly-changing Greek society. As delicately put by the Greek Ombudsman the objective should be focused on not simply tolerating the presence of illegal immigrants in the country and their participation in the labor market, but the "social integration" at least of those who desire it and who have created legal and stable links with the Greek society⁴⁸.

Endnotes:

¹ Migration and Migration Policy in Greece Critical Review and Policy Recommendations, IDEA Policy Briefs, No 3, April 2009

² The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime) can be downloaded at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>

³ US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164232.htm>

⁴ Michaletos, Ioannis "[Organized Crime in Greece: Statistics, Trends and Police Countermeasures in 2011](http://www.balkananalysis.com/greece/2011/05/15/organized-crime-in-greece-statistics-trends-and-police-countermeasures-in-2011-2/)", May 15, 2011. Accessed via: <http://www.balkananalysis.com/greece/2011/05/15/organized-crime-in-greece-statistics-trends-and-police-countermeasures-in-2011-2/>

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- ⁵ For Frontex operations in Greece see:
http://www.frontex.europa.eu/newsroom/news_releases/art74.html
- ⁶ FRONTEX Press Pack, May 2011, pages 9-11
- ⁷ Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,
<http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>
- ⁸ Refugee is someone who is outside his own country and cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution because of its race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
Asylum seeker is the immigrant who applies for protection and whose claim has not yet been definitely evaluated
- ⁹ See:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l33081_en.htm
- ¹⁰ *The Dublin II trap, Transfers of Asylum Seekers to Greece*, Amnesty International, 2010
- ¹¹ Statistics from UNHCR-Greek chapter
<http://www.unhcr.gr/exec/BOSTAT%20table2009EL.pdf>
- ¹² This was due to the fact that Greek police detains an illegal immigrant for a period of three months. After that period the detainee is released. Turkish authorities take longer than three months to reply to Greek request, See: *Stuck in a revolving door*, Human Rights Watch, 208, p. 36
- ¹³ Official site of Greek Police, Greek Ministry of Protection of the Citizen
http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=2085&Itemid=429&lang=EN, last visited 5th January 2012
- ¹⁴ Kitromilides, P. “ ‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans”, in Blinkhorn, M. and Veremis, T., (eds.) *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (Athens: Sage/ELIAMEP, 1990), p.42-43
- ¹⁵ See
http://archive.enet.gr/online/online_text/c=112,dt=16.12.2004,id=23830588,29493692,52290748,66341436,96439996,74240956,636796,45784892,80165180,61961020,69851324,75509308 (in Greek only)
- ¹⁶ Ioannis Kolovos, *Illegal Immigration A Multifaceted National Security Threat: the case of Greece*, RIEAS: Research Paper, No 145, September 2010
- ¹⁷ The relevant statistical data can be found on the Greek Police website at:
http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2010/310110stats_egklh_2009.pdf
<http://www.tovima.gr/finance/article/?aid=295093> (in Greek only)
- ¹⁸ Rossetos Fakiolas, *Regularising undocumented immigrants in Greece: procedures and effects in Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2003
- ¹⁹ Muslim Association of Greece (MAG) , *About Muslims in Greece*,
<http://equalsociety.com/en/islam/about-greek-muslims/>
- ²⁰ Greek News, *Islam in Greece*, (Greek, also available in English), 26/9/2005,
<http://www.greeknewsonline.com/?p=3768>
- ²¹ US State Department Report on Terrorism 2007, see:
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105904.pdf>
- ²² Alexis Giannoulis, *Islamic Radicalisation Processes in Greece The Islamic Radicalisation Index (IRI)*
- ²³ Defencenet news. “Immigration out of Control” (Greek), 14/3/2011,
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- ³² US Department of State, "Introduction", *Trafficking in Persons Report, 2006*, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65983.htm>. The extent to which these figures accurately reflect the extent of human trafficking remains a point of considerable contention, and thus must be approved with caution.
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