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THE IMPACT OF THE RECENT GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS ON MIGRATION. PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS FROM THE SOUTH EASTERN BORDERS OF THE EU (GREECE)

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CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2009/40

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Series on the Impact of the Economic Crisis
on South and East Mediterranean Migration

CARIM-AS 2009/40

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Abstract

Notwithstanding the difficulty of framing the topic, this study provides for a preliminary assessment of the impact of the recent global economic crisis on migration flows and employment in Greece.

After providing insights into immigration stocks, incoming migration flows and their variation in Greece as well as migration-related flows, notably remittances, in recent months, the paper discusses the main lines of Greek migration policy and the political context in which it develops so as to provide for the context of both legal and irregular migration flows. Furthermore, it analyses the current economic context with a view to highlighting recent changes in the Greek labour market as regards the employment and unemployment rates of both Greeks and immigrant workers. In the concluding section, the paper evaluates to what extent the crisis has affected migration flows into and out of Greece and seeks to make predictions on how the economic crisis may further affect migration trends in Greece.

Résumé

Eu égard à la difficulté de cerner la thématique, la présente recherche pourvoit une analyse préliminaire de l'impact de la récente crise financière sur la migration et l'emploi en Grèce. Après s'être penchée sur l'effectif des immigrés, les flux migratoires entrants en Grèce et leur variation ainsi que sur la question des rentrées d'argent au cours des derniers mois, l'étude met en exergue les lignes fondamentales de la politique migratoire grecque ainsi que le contexte politique permettant de cerner les flux d'immigrants légaux et irréguliers.

En outre, l'étude analyse la constellation économique actuelle en vue de montrer les récents changements survenus au niveau du marché du travail grec tout en tenant compte des taux d'emploi et de chômage des nationaux et des immigrants.

En guise de conclusion, la recherche évalue dans quelle mesure la crise a affecté les flux entrants et sortants et tente de faire quelques prédictions se rapportant aux répercussions éventuelles de la crise économique sur les enjeux migratoires dans le pays.

1. Introduction

Greece has been experiencing immigration for the last 20 years, mainly as a result of the geopolitical changes in Central Eastern Europe. Factors that have attracted immigrants to Greece include its relative wealth (compared to the situation in countries of origin), its large informal market where both legal and undocumented immigrants could find jobs relatively easily, the political stability that the country has experienced during the last 35 years, and last but not least, its membership in the European Union which has converted Greece into a gateway to other EU countries further north and west.

The mass of Greece's economic immigrants come from former Communist countries, either in Greece's immediate neighbourhood (like Albania or Bulgaria) or in East-Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and Eurasia (Georgia mainly). Immigrants came to Greece primarily for economic reasons but also fleeing political oppression and instability. About a third of Greece's immigrants (approximately 350,000 people) are of Greek ethnic descent (Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union (150,000) and ethnic Greeks from Albania (200,000). In recent years, Greece has been experiencing increasing immigration as well as asylum seeking from Asian countries too. Asian immigrants in Greece come mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh and to a lesser extent from India, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries in the region. Asian immigrants and asylum seekers are generally smuggled through Turkey into Greece. Some apply for asylum while others simply disappear finding their co-ethnic networks and getting a job in the Athens informal labour market.

Greek economy has experienced high growth rates (4% on average) during the first part of this decade mainly due to large scale public works related to the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004. The economy has slowed down during the last couple of years and the rising cost of living has been more acutely felt by both citizens and immigrants. While prices have been rising, wages did not follow suit while the government has been obliged to follow a policy of relative frugality with a view to containing the public debt and satisfying the requirements of the EU Stability Pact. Unemployment has fallen to 8.3% in 2008 growing to 8.7 in the first trimester of 2009, compared however to over 11% in 2000. Unemployed women and youth though register double this rate. Immigrant workers (mainly first generation) do not register a higher than natives dependency on welfare and have a higher rate of participation in the labour market. Overall, even before the outbreak of the current financial and economic crisis, Greece has not been experiencing (like other EU countries such as Spain, Britain or Ireland) a particularly rosy period as regards its economy and labour market.

The current economic and financial crisis[1] is probably yet to hit Greece although a stagnation of economic activity has already been felt in the construction and retail sectors. The tourism and catering sectors have been expected to experience the crisis more acutely over the summer period because of an estimated 20% reduction in the arrivals/reservations of foreign tourists. However, it is too early at the time of writing (July 2009) to say whether eventually this reduction did materialise.

The overall negative climate clearly affects migrants and natives alike and the media have been reporting in early 2009 the lowering of wages especially for undocumented workers as well as dire competition between legal and undocumented immigrants for low skill manual jobs in particular (bringing down daily wages from 50-60 Euros for unskilled workers to sometimes 15-20 Euros).

It might be logical to assume that the negative economic climate would lead to a reduction of migration inflows as well as a growth in outflows – assuming that some immigrants will be motivated to return to their home countries while less immigrants will be inclined to come to Greece given the negative prospects as regards employment and wages. In our view the situation is much more

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[1] For a fuller picture of Greek economy and government plans to address the impact of the crisis, see Ministry of Economy and Finance (www.mnec.gr) The 2008 Update of the Hellenic Stability and Growth Pact for 2008-2013, published: January 2009, last accessed on 22 March 2009.

complex, first because the crisis affects in different ways different categories of immigrants and their families, and second because job prospects and wages are worsening in source countries too keeping thus the comparative profit from migration similar to the pre-crisis period.

Although it is early to assess to what extent the crisis has affected migration flows and employment, in this paper we put together the background information and up to date data with a view to attempting such an assessment. In the section that follows, we present briefly the immigration stocks in Greece, a question that is by itself a formidable task since the data available only cover part of the immigrant population. We also try to assess incoming flows although again data on flows are not available by Greek statistical services. We look at data on asylum seeking, apprehensions of irregular migrants at the borders, and visa requests to gain insights into incoming flows and their variation in recent months. Section Three concentrates on migration-related flows, notably remittances and their variation in recent months. Section Four discusses the main lines of Greek migration policy and the political context in which it develops so as to provide for the context of both legal and irregular migration flows. Last but not least Section Five looks at the current economic context with a view to highlighting recent changes in the Greek labour market as regards the employment and unemployment rates of both Greeks and immigrant workers. In the concluding section, we draw the main results from the above analysis looking and whether and how the crisis has affected migration flows into and out of Greece. The paper also seeks to make predictions for the coming months and how the economic crisis may further affect migration trends in Greece.

2. Migration stocks and flows

2.1 The Size of the Immigrant Population

Currently, the immigrant population of Greece numbers about 1.3 million, or 12% of the total population of 11 million. More specifically there are

- 678,000 legal migrants in 2008 (of those approximately 363,00 had a valid stay permit in March 2009 and another 314,000 are in the process of renewing their permits)
- 185,000 co-ethnic migrants from Albania with special identity cards, who have been encouraged to naturalise since 2006.
- 155,000 co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union who have received citizenship.
- an estimated 280,000 irregular migrants (in 2008, Maroukis 2008).

2.2 National Composition of the Immigrant Population

Migrants in Greece come mostly from neighbouring countries. More than half of Greece's foreign population comes from Albania while the second largest group is Bulgarians, but their percentage of the total migrant population is considerably smaller. The following table contains data from the last census (2001), data from the Ministry of the Interior concerning the number of stay permits that were valid in April 2008 and also data from the Headquarters of the Greek Police concerning the number of valid EDTO cards and valid stay permits for EU citizens for the same month, but do not include data on valid permits of refugees and asylum seekers or the number of applications that are being processed.

It is difficult to compare the data for 2001 with those of 2008 (table 2.2 below) because the 2001 census data include undocumented migrants since the census services made an explicit effort to register all aliens residing in the country. It remains unknown, however, what percentage of the undocumented population was eventually registered in the census. The data for 2008, on the other hand, include only migrants who hold valid permits and exclude those who are undocumented, those whose permits are under process but also those who are in Greece as refugees or asylum seekers. However, Table 2.2 does give us some valuable information regarding the larger national groups present within the immigrant stock in Greece. While Albanian citizens represent approximately 60% of the total immigrant population in 2001, in 2008 they represent almost 70% of the legal foreign population that resides in the country. The percentages of Moldovan, Ukrainian and Pakistani citizens within the total legal foreign population in April 2008 are higher than the corresponding percentages in the 2001 census. This increase shows, most likely, an increase in the actual numbers but also an emergence of the respective national groups from undocumented status.

Table 2.2 National Composition of the Migration Stock in 2001 and 2008

	Census 2001		Non EU Citizens, Valid Permits, April 2008		Non EU Citizens, Valid Permits, March 2009		EU Citizens' Valid Permits April 2008		All foreigners EU and non-EU	
Country of Origin	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	438,036	57,49%	274,390	63.51%	247,463	68.04%			459,390	68.47
Bulgaria	35,104	4.60%	18,154	4,2%	3,425	0.94%	11,805	21,90%	29,959	4.47
Georgia	22,875	3.00%	12,825	2.96%	10,890	2.99%			12,825	1.91
Romania	21,994	2.88%	10,574	2.44%	2,723	0.75%	8,775	16.28%	19,349	2.88
USA	18,140	2.38%	1,893		1,960	0.54%			1,893	
Russia	17,535	2.30%	10,564	2.44%	10,061	2.77%			10,564	1.57
Cyprus	17,426	2.28%			1		5,592	10.37%	5,592	0.83
Ukraine	13,616	1.78%	17,456	4.04%	15,653	4.30%			17,456	2.60
UK	13,196	1.73%			4		6,715	12.45%	6,715	1.00
Poland	12,831	1.68%	876	0.20%	230	0.06%	6,922	12.84%	7,798	1.16
Germany	11,806	1.54%			3		4,063	7.53%	4,063	0.61
Pakistan	11,130	1.46%	11,084	2.56%	7,035	1.93%			11,084	1.65
Australia	8,767	1.15%			262					
Turkey	7,881	1.03%	1,069	0.24%	1,092	0.30%			1,069	0.16
Egypt	7,448	0.97%	10,090	2.33%	8,341	2.29%			10,090	1.50
India	7,216	0.94%	8,688	2.01%	6,668	1.83%			8,688	1.29
Philippines	6,478	0.85%	6,790	1.57%	5,637	1.55%			6,790	1.01
Italy	5,825	0.76%			1		2,218	4.11%	2,218	0.33
Moldavia	5,718	0.75%	8,767	2.02%	8,535	2.35%			8,767	1.31
Syria	5,552	0.72%	5,586	1.29%	4,800	1.32%			5,586	0.83
Bangladesh	4854	0.63%	3,761	0.87%	3,119	0.86%			3,761	0.56
OTHER	68,385	8.97%	29,455	6.81%	25,799	7.09%	7,810	18.60%	37,265	5.55
TOTAL	**761,813**	**100.00%**	**432,022**	**100.00%**	**363,702**	**100%**	**53,900**	**100.00%**	**670,922**	**100.00**

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, Census 2001, and Ministry of Interior. Data for 2001 include both regular and undocumented migrants and exclude citizens from the EU 15. Data for 2008 include only legal non EU immigrants with valid stay permits and EU citizens registered with police authorities (holders of stay permits)

2.3 Immigration flows to Greece

Neither the Greek Ministry of Interior nor the National Statistical Service (ESYE) keep data on immigration inflows towards Greece. The reason why such data are not kept is twofold. On one hand (as we explain in more detail below), the Greek policy for managing economic immigration is largely ineffective with the result that most immigrants have entered and are still entering Greece either without papers or as tourists and visitors who then become overstayers.

Family formation and reunification flows in Greece are generally status-related flow and not actual new arrivals. In other words, families come to Greece undocumented and then, when the main breadwinner (usually the husband/father but sometimes also the wife/mother) achieves the required income level s/he applies to be re-unified with her/his family. In these cases, usually the family members in question return to the home country and wait for the issuing of the visa for entering Greece as family members. There were approx. 37,000 family reunification permits issued in 2006, nearly 55,000 in 2007 and just under 20,000 in 2008. The significant decrease noted in 2008 probably refers to the impossibility of migrants to satisfy the necessary requirements (usually it is the income requirement of minimum annual worker wages[2] increased by 20% for the spouse, and by 15% for each child, that many immigrants cannot satisfy). In short, it is not wise to deduce that there is a decrease in family related flows because there is a decrease in family related permits but it is safe to say that the decrease in family reunification permits suggests a decrease in migrant workers' income. Naturally this is a tentative remark from qualitative knowledge of how migration policy works in Greece.

A large part of Greece's incoming economic immigration has originated in recent years from countries that are currently member states, notably Romania and Bulgaria. Although Romanian and Bulgarian citizens did not have access to the Greek labour market until January 2009, they could enter and reside in the country freely. Thus, our data on stocks cited in table 2.2 above only present a fraction of the Bulgarian and Romanian population that currently resides in Greece. At the same time, it is impossible to have data on inflows for these two nationalities as they do not need to register and some are even unaware that they should, even as EU citizens. Given that most Bulgarian and Romanian citizens arriving in Greece after 1 January 2007 are employed in the informal labour market, it is clear that they largely neither wish nor need to register with authorities.

In the absence of data on actual migration flows, we have sought to analyse inflows to Greece through alternative sources: we have checked visa requests at Greek consular authorities abroad with a view to analysing changes in the numbers and types of visas requested from source countries for entering Greece. We have also gathered information on asylum seeking requests. While these data do not, properly speaking, refer to immigration inflows they give indications as to the volume of immigrants arriving in Greece. Most importantly, these sources can give us an overview of changes that have taken place during 2008 and in recent months.

Visa requests

More than two thirds of the visas issued by Greek consulates abroad have been issued in the neighbouring countries (see tables 2.3.1a and 2.3.1b). More so, in issuing type D of visas (which include the possibility to apply for a stay permit for work purposes), Greek consulates from Albania and Bulgaria have the leading role. The considerable decrease in the numbers of visas type D issued by the Greek consulates in Bulgaria is explained by the accession of this country to the European Union on the 1st of January 2007. Furthermore, fluctuations in the numbers of this type of visas may be connected with the regularisation programmes enacted by Greece in 1998, 2001 and 2005. The large and increasing number of visas type A+B+C being issued by the Greek consulates are justified by the intensive role that tourism plays in Greek economy.

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[2] A large part of the legal migrant workers earns more than the minimum wages but this often does not appear in their tax declaration as employers prefer to pay extra hours or double shifts off the book, without welfare contributions and over time extra pay. It is also common that a migrant has an official job in which s/he is registered for welfare contributions and taxes and s/he also does odd jobs at evenings and weekends to make ends meet, but income from these jobs is not registered.

As regards variation between 2007 and 2008 we note an increase in the number of visas of type D issued to Albanian nationals and a notable increase for Egypt and Pakistan. At the same time there is a significant decrease on visas of type D for Bulgarian nationals which is clearly related to the expectation that access to the Greek labour market would be liberalised in January 2009 as indeed happened. The only notable decrease in the issuing of visas of type D that are the possibly migration-related visas is registered with regard to Ukrainian nationals but again overall numbers are in the range of hundreds. The visas issued by Greek consulates in 2008 suggest that possible migration inflows (to the extent that these are reflected in type D visas issued) have not diminished. There is no marked impact of the crisis as regards these legal migration inflows.

Table 2.3.1a Visas[3] issued by Greek Consulates, 2003-2005

Country	2003				2004				2005			
	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,D, visas issued	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,D visas issued	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,LTV, D visas issued
Albania	32.272	36.958	6	69.236	27.097	33.861	10	60.968	31.175	40.354	14	71.529
Armenia	1.915	154	3	2.072	1.731	217	4	1.952	1.961	290	0	2.251
Azerbaitzan	1.819	3	0	1.822	2.501	2	0	2.503	2.307	20	6	2.333
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3.624	77	0	3.701	2.074	113	0	2.187	2.303	37	0	2.340
Bulgaria	875	14.898	19	15.792	871	20.504	5	21.380	855	25.194	9	26.058
China	1.933	214	34	2.181	6.394	369	56	6.819	5.806	182	16	6.004
Egypt	3.236	1.660	50	4.946	4.016	2.140	78	6.234	5.297	2.524	111	7.932
FYROM	90.541	8	88.345	178.894	100.196	230	97.959	198.385	2.413	430	68.640	71.483
Georgia	5.108	325	26	5.458	5.776	547	150	6.473	4.754	444	0	5.198
India	2.882	611	18	3.511	4.074	628	0	4.702	4.067	819	0	4.886
Kazakhstan	2.057	81	0	2.138	3.151	164	0	3.315	2.594	112	0	2.706
Lebanon	5.925	42	393	6.360	4.653	100	185	4.938	5.065	87	82	5.234
Nigeria	2.751	129	0	2.880	2.845	95	0	2.940	485	43	14	542
Pakistan	765	95	0	860	831	26	79	936	791	222	12	1.025
Russia	119.426	595	16	120.037	100.548	703	362	101.613	144.732	875	453	146.060
Serbia and Montenegro	50.490	50	77	50.617	49.989	282	403	50.674	59.289	337	280	59.906
Syria	2.932	213	224	3.3369	2.079	239	139	2.457	2.050	365	32	2.447
Turkey	41.561	174	68	41803	44.400	207	168	44.775	49.602	281	9	49891
Ukraine	17.871	862	221	18.954	16.911	1.178	387	18.476	18.962	1.380	101	20.443
Total Visas	433.774	60.527	92.517	586.818	426.136	66.814	101.954	594.908	389.446	79.059	71.225	539.730

Source: Compiled by authors, based on data available from the Council of the European Union, General Secretariat

[3] Visa A type: This type of visa gives the right to transit the international border of an airport without being allowed to set foot on Greek soil.

Visa B type: This type of visa allows an alien to transit from one state to another and pass through the common space.

Visa C type: This type of visa allows aliens to enter and reside on the territory of the Member states for other reasons than migration for a period of time which should not exceed 3 months.

Visa D type: This type of visa allows an alien to enter and reside on Greek territory, for a period no longer than 90 days and it includes the possibility of issuing a residence permit.

Visa: VTL: This type of visa allows an alien to enter and reside in a specified state or number of states.

Table 2.3.1b Visas issued by Greek Consulates, 2006-2008

Country	2006				2007				2008			
	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,LTV, D visas issued	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,LTV, D visas issued	Total visas A+ B+C	Visas D	VTL visas issued	Total A,B,C,LTV, D visas issued
Albania	30.291	30.139	2	60.432	28.773	25.438	0	54.211	30.238	27.357	0	57.595
Armenia	3.104	80	0	3.184	3.239	63	0	3.302	3.875	96	0	3.971
Azerbaijan	1.848	15	45	1.908	785	13	2	800	985	54	0	1.039
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2.879	38	1	2.918	3.402	42	0	3.444	3.979	27	0	4.006
Bulgaria	814	17.471	25	18.310	867	6.119	36	7.022	907	2293	0	3.200
China	10.821	150	0	10.971	12.292	153	0	12.445	10.781	128	0	10.909
Egypt	5.560	2.516	142	8.218	1.146	49	11	1.206	6.746	1.878	172	8.796
FYROM	465	133	81.378	81.976	509	179	97.629	98.317	489	170	79.729	80.388
Georgia	4.781	1	107	4.889	6.597	166	0	6.763	6.419	213	1	6.633
India	6.436	1.259	0	7.695	5.385	412	1	5.808	4.870	624	6	5.500
Kazakhstan	3.294	17	0	3.312	3.154	12	1	3.167	3.696	14	0	3.710
Lebanon	3.204	95	392	3.691	5.834	0	35	5.869	4.635	30	56	4.721
Montenegro	1.970	71	1	2.042	2.461	34	34	2.529	2.364	37	148	2.549
Nigeria	621	45	10	677	391	38	0	429	475	52	5	532
Pakistan	696	252	72	1.020	930	183	9	1.122	518	349	19	886
Russia	201.304	558	5	201.867	231.638	653	1	232.292	307.796	894	0	308.690
Serbia	78.367	250	296	78.913	98.966	321	273	99.560	114.459	443	408	115.310
Syria	2.389	180	51	2.620	2.343	160	48	2.551	2.085	258	37	2.380
Turkey	52.505	283	23	52.811	54.237	309	6	54.552	56.146	231	5	56.382
Ukraine	29.745	535	8	30.288	29.064	497	212	29.773	16.252	255	0	16.507
Total Visas	494.717	58.356	83.608	636.681	557.443	41.067	99.654	698.164	649.582	38.880	81.328	769.790

Source: Compiled by authors, based on data available from the Council of the European Union, General Secretariat.

Asylum-seekers

Table 2.3.2 suggests an increase in the numbers of asylum seekers in Greece. Naturally, the numbers and nationalities of those seeking for asylum depends on the socio-political conditions prevailing in their country of origin. As a consequence, those who ask for a refugee status in Greece may be placed into two time series. The first period, between 2001 and 2003 comprises high numbers of people coming from Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey. During the second period, after 2004, we notice an increase in the numbers of asylum seekers from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Georgia. In the case of Georgia the increase in asylum seekers is related to the war in the summer of 2007, in the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh factors that may explain the increase include both economic and political instability.

Table 2.3.2. Asylum seekers in Greece (2000-2008)

Country	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Iraq	**1972**	**35,86%**	**2567**	**45,32%**	**2879**	**35,20%**	**936**	**20,94%**	**971**	**10,73%**			**5.474**	**21,80%**		
Afghanistan	**1459**	**26,53%**	**1238**	**21,86%**	**593**	**7,25%**	**382**	**8,55%**	**458**	**5,06%**			**1.556**	**6,20%**		
Iran	212	3,86%	411	7,26%	632	7,73%	228	5,10%	203	2,24%			354	1,41%		
Turkey	800	14,55%	211	3,73%	218	2,67%	120	2,69%	126	1,39%			133	0,53%		
Pakistan	**252**	**4,58%**	**250**	**4,41%**	**703**	**8,60%**	**247**	**5,53%**	**1154**	**12,75%**			**9.144**	**36,41%**		
Nigeria			184	3,25%	468	5,72%	325	7,27%	406	4,49%			390	1,55%		
Morocco	148	2,69%	10	0,18%									9	0,03%		
Sierra Leone	163	2,96%	70	1,24%									16	0,06%		
Popular Dem. of Congo (former Zair)			65	1,15%									5	0,02%		
Somalia			69	1,22%	426	5,21%		3,13%	110	1,21%			174	0,69%		
Sudan			58	1,02%	222	2,71%		2,02%	120	1,33%			105	0,42%		
Georgia								**7,23%**	**1897**	**20,96%**			**1.559**	**6,21%**		
Myanmar					496	6,07%		3,16%	68	0,75%			5	0,02%		
Bangladesh					**251**	**3,07%**		**4,65%**	**550**	**6,08%**			**2.965**	**11,81%**		
Palestinians					206	2,53%		1,68%		0%						
Total	**5.499**	**100%**	**5.664**	**100%**	**8178**	**100%**	**4.469**	**100%**	**9.050**	**100%**	**12.267**	**100%**	**25.113**	**100%**	**19.884**	**100%**

Source: UNHCR, Greece. Data per nationality for 2008 were not released by the Ministry of Interior, despite our repeated requests. Only data of applications approved in 2008 were available but these represent a tiny fraction of the total.

Total numbers of asylum seekers have doubled each year between 2004 and 2007 but slightly decreased in 2008 by 20%. But since we could not get hold of data per nationality we cannot estimate whether this means a decrease in flows from Asia or Africa through Turkey. It is worth noting that asylum has become a very politicised issue in Greece during the last couple of years after the repeated accusations of international NGOs that people are not effectively given the opportunity to apply for asylum when they arrive in Greece and that after applying their cases are not properly processed (Human Rights Watch 2008, Pro Asyl 2007).

Aliens Apprehended at the Borders

Paradoxically a valid source of information regarding aliens arriving in Greece is data on irregular migrants apprehended at the borders. Table 2.3.3 below shows the number of apprehensions per border per year in the period 2006-2008. It is interesting to note that there is an increase in the 'other' category which refers to people apprehended within Greece, far from the borders. This increase testifies to an increase in enforcement. By contrast, numbers of apprehensions on the Greek Albanian border slightly increase between 2006 and 2007 but only witness a slight decrease (in the range of less than 10%) in 2008. Similarly numbers of apprehensions on the Greek Turkish green border remain approximately the same each year (around 15,000) with actually a small decrease between 2007 and 2008. By contrast there is remarkable increase on apprehensions in the Greek islands of the Aegean. Thus, from just under 7,000 in 2006, apprehensions are more than double in 2007 (about 17,000) and double again in 2008 (reaching just over 2008). These data certainly do not suggest a decrease in incoming irregular migration flows along the Greek Turkish corridor.

Table 2.3.3: Aliens apprehended in Greece (within the country and at the border), per nationality

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Albania	173,957	36,827	35,789	31,637	52,132	57,466	66,818	72,454
Iraq	8,379	8,455	1,402	988	1,064	8,157	12,549	15,940
Romania	5,026	517	775	951	1,195	1,791	-	-
Bangladesh	2,424	471	-	-	-	1,824	721	1,655
Afghanistan	2,358	2,234	1,591	1,802	1,771	5,260	11,011	25,577
Iran	2,313	1,383	730	-	-	-	-	-
Pakistan	1,843	918	-	687	1,019	3,350	2,834	5,512
Bulgaria	1,469	1,262	1,889	1,553	1,649	1,657	-	-
FYROM	1,112	722	1,088	711	993	-	-	-
Moldavia	732	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
India	-	728	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	934	-	-	2,618	3,656	6,713
Palestine	-	-	785	738	799	2,847	5,135	4,593
Turkey	-	-	669	-	-	-	-	-
Egypt	-	-	-	801	735	-	598	-
Georgia	-	-	-	527	796	1,708	1,441	2,961
Mauritania	-	-	-	-	-	-	532	-
Myanmar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,611
Eritrea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,566

Source: Ministry of Interior, published in daily Kathimerini, 11 June 2009.

Table 2.3.4 Aliens apprehended at Greek borders, per border

	2006	2007	2008
Greek-Albanian border	33.018	42.597	39.267
Greek-FYROM border	3.541	2.887	3.459
Greek-Bulgarian border	1.132	966	1.795
Greek-Turkish land border	15.265	16.789	14.461
Greek-Turkish sea border	6.886	16.781	30.149
Crete	2.432	2.245	2.961
Other	32.365	29.799	54.245
Total	95.239	112.364	146.337
Data for apprehended aliens at Greek borders, 2008-2009 variation			
	1st quadrimester 2008	1st quardimester 2009	Change (%)
Apprehended irregular migrants	33.371	32.036	-4
Apprehended traffickers	500	447	-10.6
Apprehended irregular migrants*	22.151	15.283	-31
Apprehended traffickers*	389	288	-26
Confiscated means of transport	342	229	-33
*by local border departments and departments for foreigners' prosecution			

Source: Ministry of Interior, published in daily Kathimerini, 11 June 2009.

In conclusion, this survey of related data sources shows that there are no official data on inflows of legal migration to Greece hence it is difficult to assess whether the crisis has affected these flows. Regarding irregular migration flows, asylum-seeking related flows and visa requests, the data gathered and analysed do not indicate a significant decrease in overall flows to Greece, especially as regards migrants transiting through Turkey.

3. Migration-related flows: Remittances

With a view to assessing how the current economic crisis has affected immigration towards Greece we have also checked the in- and out-flow of remittances.[4]

3.1 Remittances

The table below (Table 3.1.1) shows the remittances sent from and received in Greece in the period 2000-2008 through the official banking system. We have included in this paper the 20 countries with the largest volume of money flows with Greece. The data made available from the Bank of Greece, which concern obviously only remittances sent through the banking system, show that money flows sent from and received by Greece have radically increased from 2005 onwards. There are six countries for which the balance between payments and earnings is negative, meaning that the amount of money sent from Greece highly exceeds the amount of money received from the same country and these are:

[4] We tried to gather information regarding the immigrants' use of bank services and their access to the credit market and/or the housing market (e.g. loans) but such data were not available.

Albania, Israel, Georgia, Philippines, Romania, and Moldova. As it might have been assumed a priori, Albania, the country with the highest number of citizens residing in Greece is also the main country towards which remittances go.

Table 3.1.1a Remittances sent from Greece*, 2000- 2008

COUNTRY	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Albania	1.1	1.8	2.7	9.2	29.3	241.5	247.8	346.4	389.9
Israel	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.1	3.8	27.7	31.9	68.7	113.5
Georgia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	47.9
Philippines	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.0	7.1	28.8
Romania	0.2	0.5	0.9	4.6	7.5	8.6	14.6	14.2	9.5
Moldova	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.0	2.9	1.2	1.2	5.9
FYROM	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2
Netherlands	2.1	2.7	14.4	0.3	0.8	1.1	1.1	4.0	5.7
Japan	1.9	1.2	0.3	0.1	4.6	0.1	0.0	4.2	6.5
Switzerland	3.5	2.1	26.5	2.5	0.7	1.4	1.2	1.7	2.6
France	1.4	1.8	9.7	0.8	10.2	12.1	1.8	3.2	2.2
Canada	22.0	33.7	47.9	24.9	11.7	17.4	16.4	15.7	20.3
Austria	0.2	0.3	4.0	0.1	0.3	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.4
Australia	12.4	20.4	46.1	14.8	22.6	13.6	12.4	11.5	17.6
Italy	3.1	2.4	32.8	1.0	1.1	2.2	4.0	12.9	11.8
Cyprus	0.8	3.4	17.1	7.1	8.8	5.3	2.6	1.6	1.7
Sweden	2.8	4.2	31.8	2.4	1.4	3.0	1.2	3.0	2.6
Belgium	6.8	12.1	120.5	0.8	0.8	1.6	1.0	2.8	2.1
Great Britain	9.6	12.4	67.8	9.0	5.5	10.1	6.3	6.8	10.7
USA	105.6	104.6	424.2	71.7	67.3	118.5	116.2	153.9	120.8
Germany	138.8	107.1	351.2	9.7	21.0	25.9	21.3	51.1	72.3
Other Countries	4.6	6.9	48.4	5.4	9.9	10.8	23.2	19.2	16.9
Total	**317.4**	**318.0**	**1.248.0**	**165.4**	**209.6**	**505.4**	**506.9**	**730.9**	**890.8**

Source: Bank of Greece, Statistical Department, 2009.

*Amount in millions of euro

Table 3.1.1b Remittances received in Greece*, 2000- 2008

COUNTRY	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Albania	0.1	0.2	2.7	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.8
Israel	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.2
Georgia	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Philippines	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Romania	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.7	3.4	2.3	2.1
Moldova	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
FYROM	0.1	0.1	1.1	4.4	5.6	7.5	7.8	7.8	8.1
Netherlands	14.4	7.8	14.4	7.5	7.6	6.3	12.4	21.3	16.9
Japan	1.4	2.1	0.3	1.0	10.9	0.4	3.1	4.8	18.6
Switzerland	41.6	30.2	26.5	22.5	18.3	18.9	18.1	17.6	15.1
France	11.5	8.5	9.7	18.3	8.9	12.4	14.1	21.5	18.1
Canada	61.3	62.2	47.9	58.5	24.8	32.3	33.3	31.5	37.3
Austria	4.5	2.2	4.0	3.6	2.4	3.9	8.7	13.3	18.7
Australia	54.3	43.2	46.1	43.6	66.7	33.5	27.8	26.2	38.5
Italy	14.0	8.9	32.8	41.0	18.0	56.7	66.3	43.4	33.3
Cyprus	3.4	9.3	17.1	23.2	20.0	15.8	22.0	63.7	23.9
Sweden	35.0	32.2	31.8	40.7	24.4	23.2	22.1	26.5	24.9
Belgium	124.1	210.8	120.5	32.1	26.4	40.1	31.2	28.7	29.6
Great Britain	56.0	52.1	67.8	60.5	42.4	50.8	55.5	53.2	44.2
USA	592.0	456.8	424.2	316.8	205.6	259.1	367.1	515.4	556.8
Germany	723.4	599.3	351.2	312.0	181.7	95.1	174.3	516.6	544.9
Other Countries	14.2	117.3	48.4	59.9	54.3	39.5	37.2	43.0	44.9
Total	**1,751.8**	**1,643.8**	**1,248.0**	**1,048.7**	**721.2**	**697.7**	**906.5**	**1.439.5**	**1.478.1**

Source: Bank of Greece, Statistical Department, 2009.

*Amount in millions of euro

Table 3.1.2 Remittances sent from and received by Greece, 2008

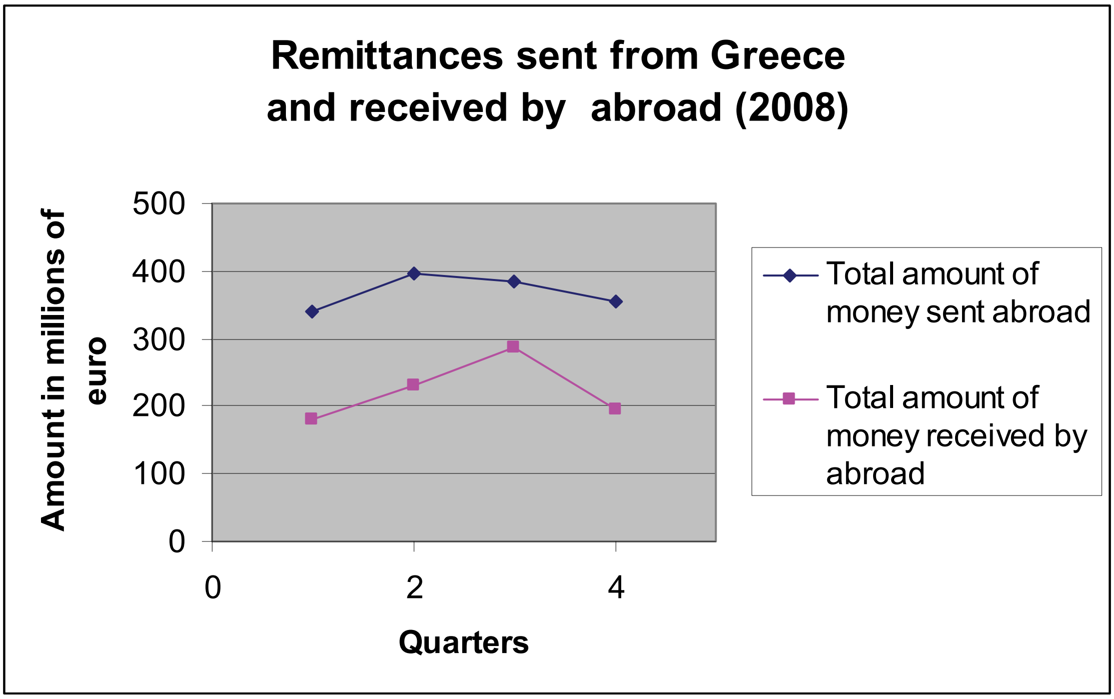
	Q1-2008	Q2-2008	Q3-2008	Q4-2008
Total amount of money sent abroad	340.1	397.8	384.1	356.2
Total amount of money received by abroad	180.8	229.7	286.2	194.0

Source: Bank of Greece, Statistical Department, 2009. *Amounts in million Euro.

Not only our contextual knowledge but also informal sources of the Bank of Greece suggest though that remittances through the banking system represent only the tip of the iceberg: they are only a fraction of total remittances especially with countries in the larger southeastern Europe region. More commonly migrants remit their money in cash through relatives or friends who travel to the home country or indeed through the informal service provided by bus companies. Bus drivers transfer important sums of money from individual customers for a rather low fee (of 10 or 20 Euros).

Even if it is impossible to gather data on remittances that take place in cash through various informal channels, it is probably safe to assume that their distribution in terms of countries is similar to that of remittances through the banking system. It is also plausible that changes in the official remittances' volume and direction are equally reflected in the volume and direction of informal remittances.

Figure 3.1.1: Remittance out-flows



However, one should also note that the rise in the volume of payments may also suggest not an absolute increase of the total remittances to and from a foreign country. It may simply suggest that migrants have started remitting more often and larger amounts through official channels. In short, data on remittances through banks suggest an increase in remittances from Greece towards all migrant source countries with the exception of Romania. Thus, here again the effect of the crisis does not appear to have been felt, at least not until the end of 2008 for which we have data.

4. The Economic Context of Migration

In this section we have investigate the immigrant and native employment/unemployment trends up until the first trimester of 2009 for which data are available with a view to assessing whether and how the economic and financial crisis of the last year has affected the migrants' work situation in Greece.

Employment/unemployment data (see tables and figures below) show that there has been no decrease in employment rates (either for men or women) of natives while the unemployment rate has dropped considerably. If one compares the data of the first quarter of 2008 with the data from the same quarter of the previous year, the statement is being reconfirmed. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the latest tendency of employers to adopt measures in order to face the acute economical crisis. Based upon Law 2639/1998, employers are provided with the possibility to implement flexible measures such as reductions in the number of working hours (implying reduction in the number of insurance stamps and wages), compulsory permissions and suspensions. These developments are expected to have a direct impact on the socio-economic situation of workers in Greece, including immigrants. However, for the time being the adoption of such measures is only discussed in the media with reference to specific companies and generally affecting small numbers of workers.

Table 4.1: Employed Population of 15 years old and over (last quarter of each year and all quarters for 2008)

COUNTRY	2000 (4th quarter)	2001 (4th quarter)	2002 (4th quarter)	2003 (4th quarter)	2004 (4th quarter)	2005 (4th quarter)	2006 (4th quarter)	2007 (4th quarter)	2008 (1st quarter)	2008 (2nd quarter)	2008 (3rd quarter)	2008 (4th quarter)
Greece	3,939,953	3,859,533	3,962,270	4,016,240	4,036,558	4,072,273	4,151,238	4,164,231	4,163,235	4,202,786	4,197,876	4,146,902
Albania	88,595	104,329	135,152	148,953	164,375	175,896	171,414	194,472	189,166	197,762	199,006	208,354
Bulgaria	5,515	7,250	12,202	12,316	18,128	19,593	19,899	23,575	23,220	22,922	26,432	27,746
Romania	3,151	3,638	8,047	10,040	11,256	12,436	12,483	14,927	11,735	14,105	14,358	16,294
Georgia	1,905	4,651	4,921	4,213	7,336	8,825	8,990	13,859	14,424	19,547	20,034	20,806
Ukraine	1,758	3,971	7,788	7,304	9,705	9,058	8,990	9,454	9,390	7,546	6,912	6,176
Pakistan	2,724	2,764	4,157	5,238	3,665	5,351	6,115	11,618	11,607	13,928	13,417	14,934
Egypt	2,196	3,092	4,763	7,115	3,871	2,422	2,770	3,139	3,815	4,629	5,805	7,533
Bangladesh	849	858	1,498	1,019	1,614	1,861	1,825	2,377	3,573	7,826	9,453	10,662
Russia	8,788	9,347	10,192	8,752	9,249	9,564	10,071	11,623	11,252	11,354	9,975	9,496
Iraq	1,032	1,518	2,939	3,627	2,667	3,525	3,054	1,498	1,611	1,980	2,252	2,379
Total employed	4,104,523	4,051,841	4,212,823	4,277,876	4,331,412	4,383,386	4,462,111	4,519,123	4,511,609	4,582,544	4,589,779	4,553,623
Total population over 15	8,866,707	8,929,800	8,984,124	9,033,087	9,082,497	9,122,312	9,179,147	9,216,040	9,222,676	9,230,110	9,237,802	9,245,754

Source: Greek General Secretariat, National Statistical Service (ESYE), 2000-2008.

Table 4.2 Unemployed population of 15 years old and over (last quarter for each years since 2000, and all quarters for 2008)

COUNTRY	2000 (4th quarter)	2001 (4th quarter)	2002 (4th quarter)	2003 (4th quarter)	2004 (4th quarter)	2005 (4th quarter)	2006 (4th quarter)	2007 (4th quarter)	2008 (1st quarter)	2008 (2nd quarter)	2008 (3rd quarter)	2008 (4th quarter)
Greece	481,024	485,232	447,559	442,961	470,349	444,051	400,109	370,170	377,927	331,527	331,963	359,739
Albania	11,393	15,261	14,095	15,701	16,468	12,955	15,646	14,494	13,835	13,481	11,068	16,161
Bulgaria	677	624	1,586	934	678	1,313	1,752	1,082	1,987	1,804	1,111	2,437
Romania	624	1,144	1,970	637	829	969	1,145	1,453	1,326	772	1,673	1,745
Georgia	998	992	1,429	1,091	1,007	1,085	928	2,077	1,949	1,687	1,465	1,871
Ukraine	176	380	949	540	956	690	381	452	452	422	429	458
Pakistan	992	0	548	761	214	0	307	376	365	844	1,319	1,323
Egypt	248	171	171	553	0	0	0	77	76	78	0	191
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0	0	430	232	212	214	0	642	579
Russia	1,025	1,058	1,314	1,773	283	771	1,116	1,490	1,545	1,586	1,561	1,304
Iraq	303	515	389	363	572	548	878	0	213	212	209	207
Total unemployed	504,894	513,367	476,004	471,050	500,381	470,880	429,090	396,499	406,547	357,143	355,145	392,668
Total population over 15	8,866,707	8,929,800	8,984,124	9,033,087	9,082,497	9,122,312	9,179,147	9,216,040	9,222,676	9,230,110	9,237,802	9,245,754

Source: Greek General Secretariat, National Statistical Service (ESYE), 2000-2008.

Table 4.3 Labour force by nationality

COUNTRY	2000 (4th quarter)	2001 (4th quarter)	2002 (4th quarter)	2003 (4th quarter)	2004 (4th quarter)	2005 (4th quarter)	2006 (4th quarter)	2007 (4th quarter)	2008 (1st quarter)	2008 (2nd quarter)	2008 (3rd quarter)	2008 (4th quarter)
Greece	4,420,977	4,344,765	4,409,829	4,459,201	4,506,907	4,516,324	4,551,347	4,534,401	4,541,162	4,534,313	4,529,839	4,506,641
Albania	99,988	119,590	149,247	164,654	180,843	188,851	187,060	208,966	203,001	211,243	210,074	224,515
Bulgaria	6,192	7,874	13,788	13,250	18,806	21,266	21,651	24,657	25,207	24,726	27,543	30,183
Romania	3,775	4,782	10,017	10,677	12,085	13,405	13,628	16,380	13,061	14,877	16,031	18,039
Georgia	2,903	5,643	6,350	5,304	8,343	9,910	9,918	15,936	16,373	21,234	21,499	22,677
Ukraine	1,934	4,351	8,737	7,844	10,661	9,748	9,371	9,906	9,842	7,968	7,341	6,634
Pakistan	3,716	2,764	5,405	5,999	3,879	5,351	6,422	11,994	11,972	14,772	14,736	16,257
Egypt	2,444	3,263	4,934	7,668	3,871	2,422	2,770	3,216	3,891	4,707	5,805	7,724
Bangladesh	849	858	1,498	1,019	1,614	2,291	2,057	2,589	3,787	7,826	10,095	11,241
Russia	9,813	10,405	11,506	10,525	9,532	9,564	11,187	13,113	12,797	12,940	11,536	10,800
Iraq	1,335	2,033	3,328	3,990	3,239	4,073	3,932	1,498	1,824	2,192	2,461	2586
Total labor force	4,609,417	4,565,208	4,688,827	4,459,201	4,831,793	4,854,266	4,891,201	4,915,662	4,918,156	4,939,687	4,944,924	4,946,291

Source: Greek General Secretariat, National Statistical Service (ESYE), 2000-2008.

Table 4.4 Employment rate/labor force

COUNTRY	2000 (4th quarter)	2001 (4th quarter)	2002 (4th quarter)	2003 (4th quarter)	2004 (4th quarter)	2005 (4th quarter)	2006 (4th quarter)	2007 (4th quarter)	2008 (1st quarter)	2008 (2nd quarter)	2008 (3rd quarter)	2008 (4th quarter)
Greece	89.12%	88.83%	89.86%	90.06%	89.57%	90.17%	91.20%	91.83%	91.68%	92.69%	92.67%	92.02%
Albania	88.61%	87.24%	90.56%	90.44%	90.90%	93.15%	91.63%	93.07%	93.18%	93.45%	94.73%	92.80%
Bulgaria	89.07	92.07	88.50	92.95	96.38	93.83	94.71	95.61	92.12	92.70	95.97	91.93
Romania	83.47%	76.08%	80.33%	94.03%	93.15%	92.78%	91.59%	91.13%	90.25%	94.81%	89.56%	90.32%
Georgia	65.62%	82.40%	77.50%	79.43%	87.94%	87.71%	90.64%	86.97%	88.10%	92.06%	93.19%	91.76%
Ukraine	90.90%	91.27%	89.14%	93.12%	91.04%	92.93%	95.93%	95.44%	95.41%	94.70%	94.16%	93.10%
Pakistan	73.30%	100%	89.87%	87.30%	94.49%	100%	95.22%	96.87%	96.95%	94.29%	91.05%	91.86%
Egypt	89.85%	94.75%	96.53%	92.80%	100%	100%	100%	97.61%	98.05%	98.34%	100%	97.53%
Bangladesh	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	81.24%	88.73%	91.82%	94.35%	100%	93.64%	94.86%
Russia	89.56%	89.83%	88.58%	87.52%	97.04%	92.54%	89.97%	88.63%	87.93%	87.74%	86.47%	87.93%
Iraq	77.31%	74.67%	88.31%	90.91%	82.45%	86.54%	77.67%	100%	88.32%	90.32%	91.51%	92.00%
Total	89.05%	88.74%	89.85%	89.44%	89.64%	90.30%	91.23%	91.93%	91.73%	92.77%	92.82%	92.06%

Source: Greek General Secretariat, National Statistical Service (ESYE), 2000-2008.

Figure 4.1 Employment rate per nationality (2000-2007)

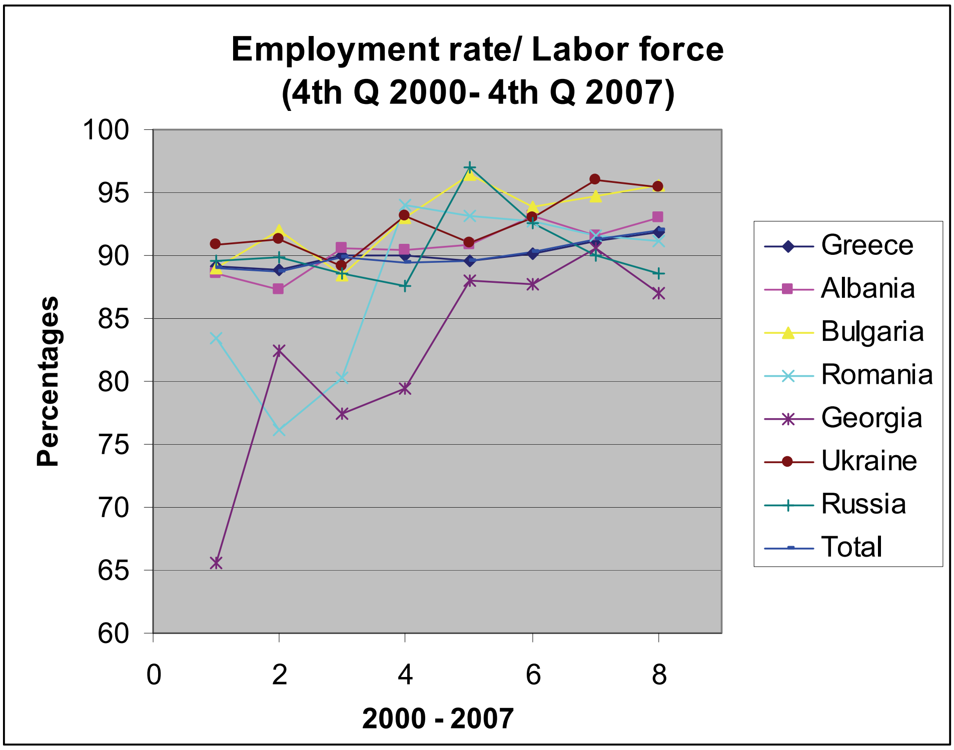


Figure 4.2 Employment rate per nationality (2008)

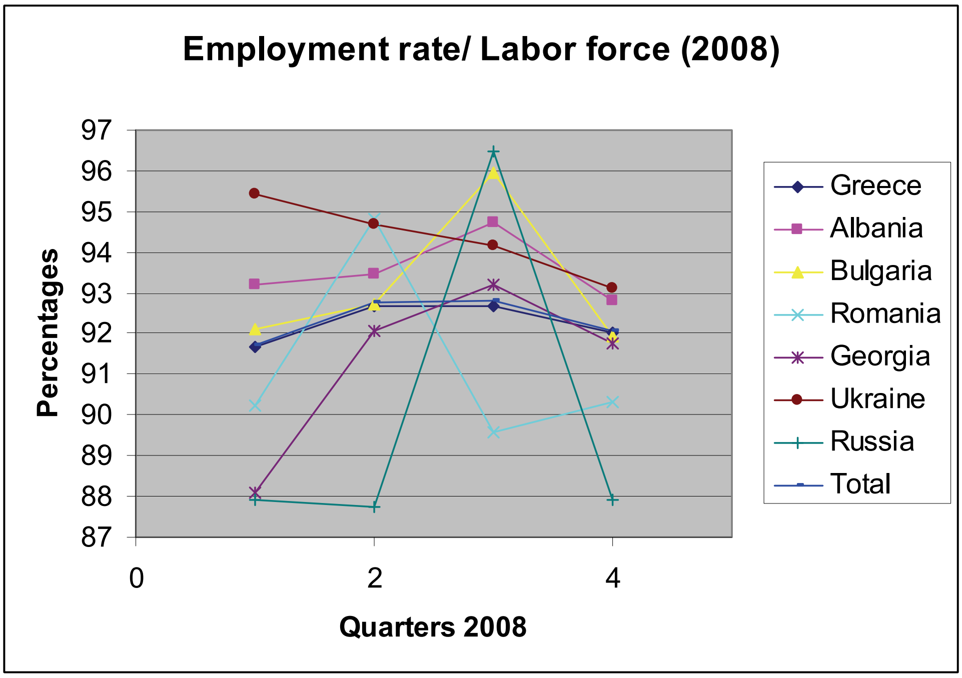


Figure 4.3: Employment rate per nationality for smaller migrant groups (2000-2007)

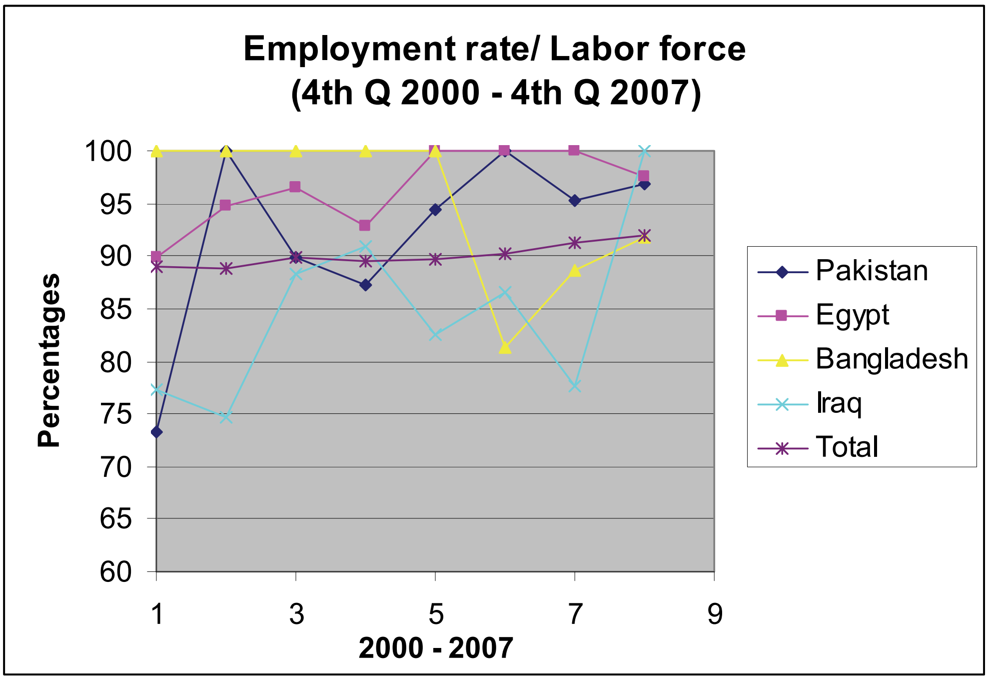


Figure 4.4 Employment rate per nationality for smaller immigrant groups (2008)

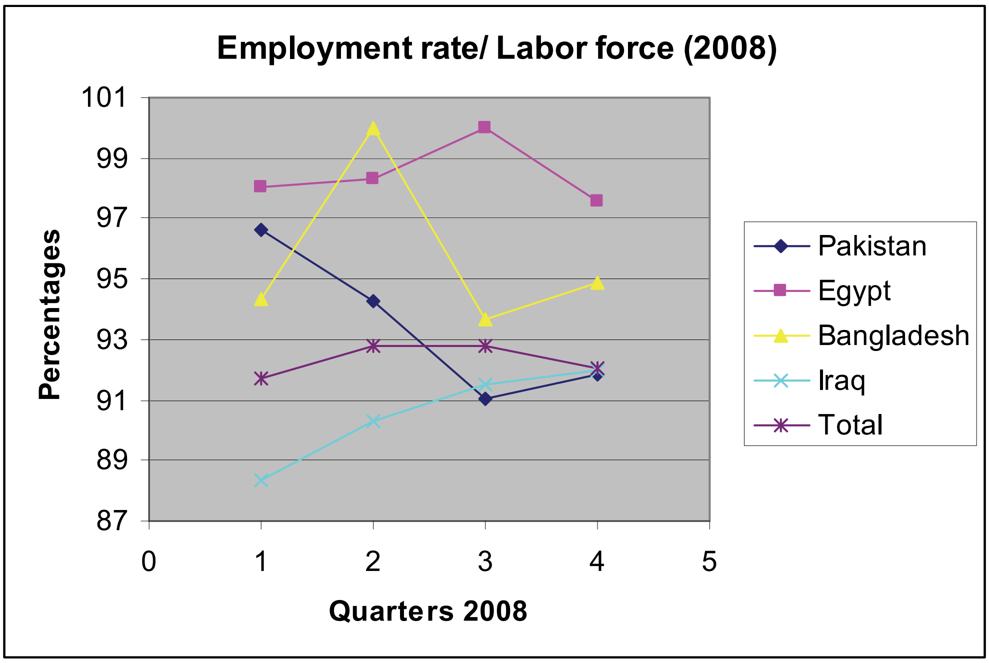


Table 4.5 Unemployment rate per nationality (4th quarter per year between 2000 and 2007 and all quarters for 2008)

COUNTRY	2000 (4th quarter)	2001 (4th quarter)	2002 (4th quarter)	2003 (4th quarter)	2004 (4th quarter)	2005 (4th quarter)	2006 (4th quarter)	2007 (4th quarter)	2008 (1st quarter)	2008 (2nd quarter)	2008 (3rd quarter)	2008 (4th quarter)
Greece	10.88%	11.17%	10.14%	9.93%	10.43%	9.83%	8.79%	8.16%	8.32%	7.31%	7.33%	7.98%
Albania	11.39%	12.76%	9.44%	9.56%	9.10%	6.95%	8.396%	6.93%	6.82%	6.55%	5.27%	7.20%
Bulgaria	10.93%	7.92%	11.50%	7.05%	3.62%	6.17%	5.28%	4.39%	7.88%	7.30%	4.03%	8.07%
Romania	16.53%	23.92%	19.67%	5.97%	6.85%	7.22%	8.40%	8.87%	9.75%	5.19%	10.44%	9.67%
Georgia	34.38%	17.60%	22.50%	20.57%	12.06%	12.29%	9.36%	13.03%	11.90%	7.94%	6.81%	8.25%
Ukraine	9.10%	8.73%	10.86%	6.88%	8.96%	7.07%	4.06%	4.56%	4.59%	5.30%	5.84%	6.90%
Pakistan	26.7%	0%	10.13%	12.70%	5.51%	0%	4.78%	3.13%	3.05%	5.71%	8.95%	8.14%
Egypt	10.15%	5.24%	3.47%	7.20%	0%	2.422%	0%	2.39%	1.95%	1.66%	0%	2.47%
Bangladesh	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18.76%	11.27%	8.18%	5.65%	0%	6.36%	5.15%
Russia	10.46%	10.17%	11.42%	12.48%	2.96%	7.46%	10.03%	11.36%	12.07%	12.26%	13.53%	12.07%
Iraq	22.69%	25.33%	11.69%	9.09%	17.65%	13.45%	22.33%	0%	11.68%	9.67%	8.49%	8.00%
Total	10.95%	11.26%	10.15%	10.56%	10.36%	9.70%	8.77%	8.07%	8.27%	7.23%	7.18%	7.94%

Source: Greek General Secretariat, National Statistical Service (ESYE), 2000-2008.

Figure 4.5 Unemployment rate per nationality (2000-2007)

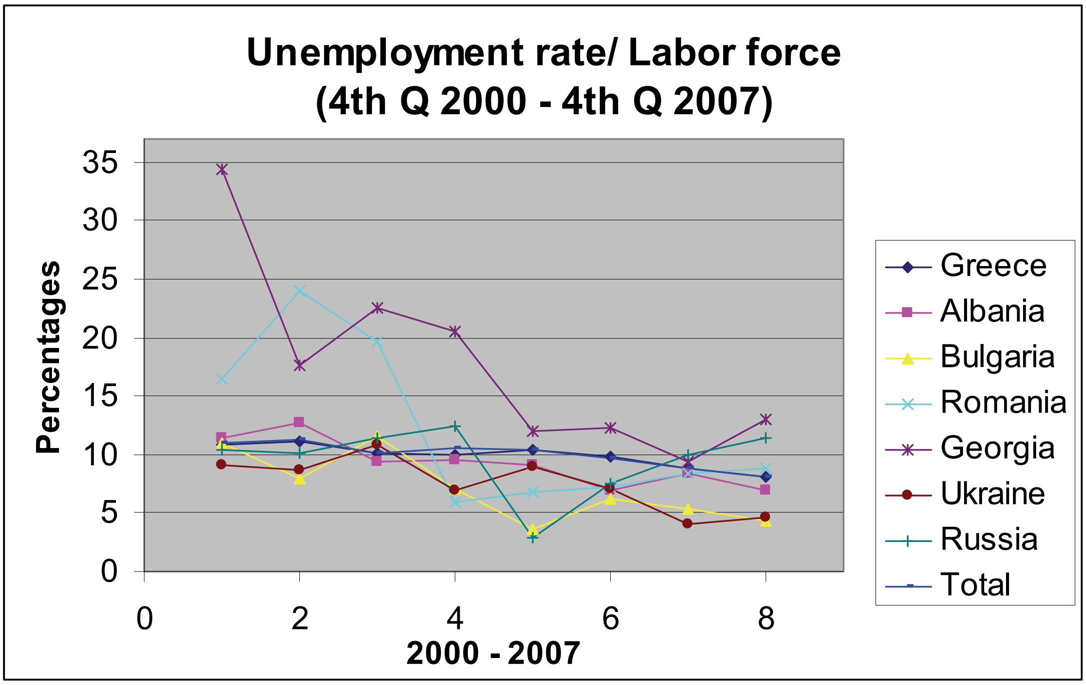


Figure 4.6 Unemployment rate per nationality (2008)

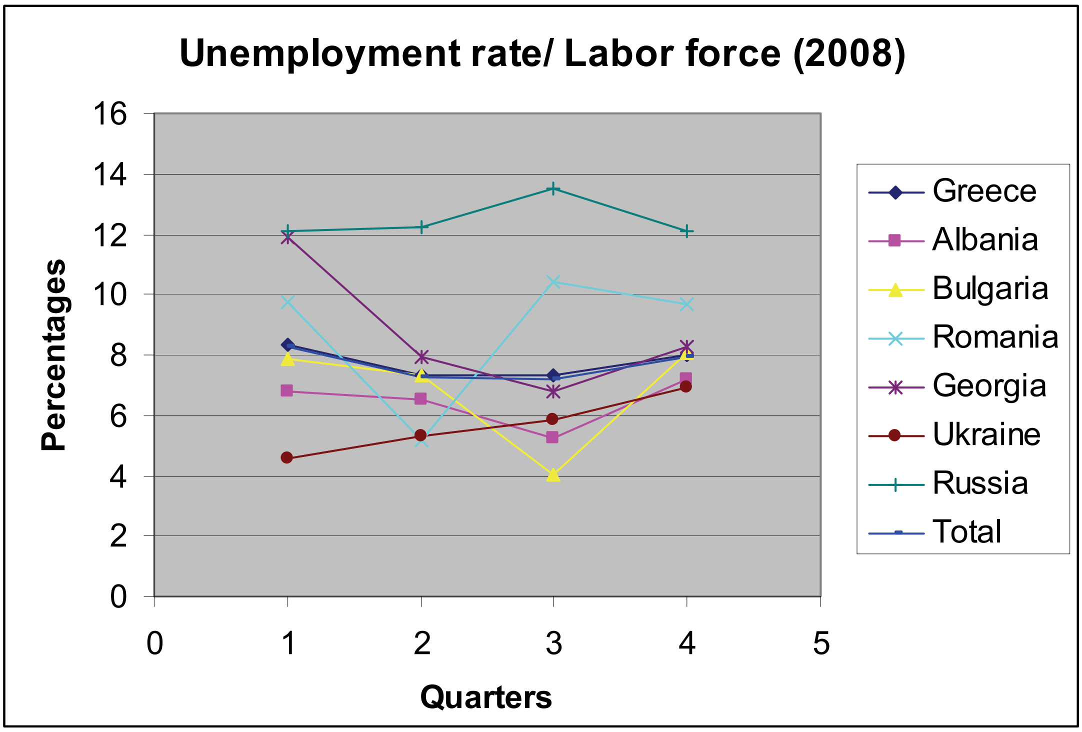


Figure 4.7 Unemployment rate per nationality for smaller immigrant groups (2000-2007)

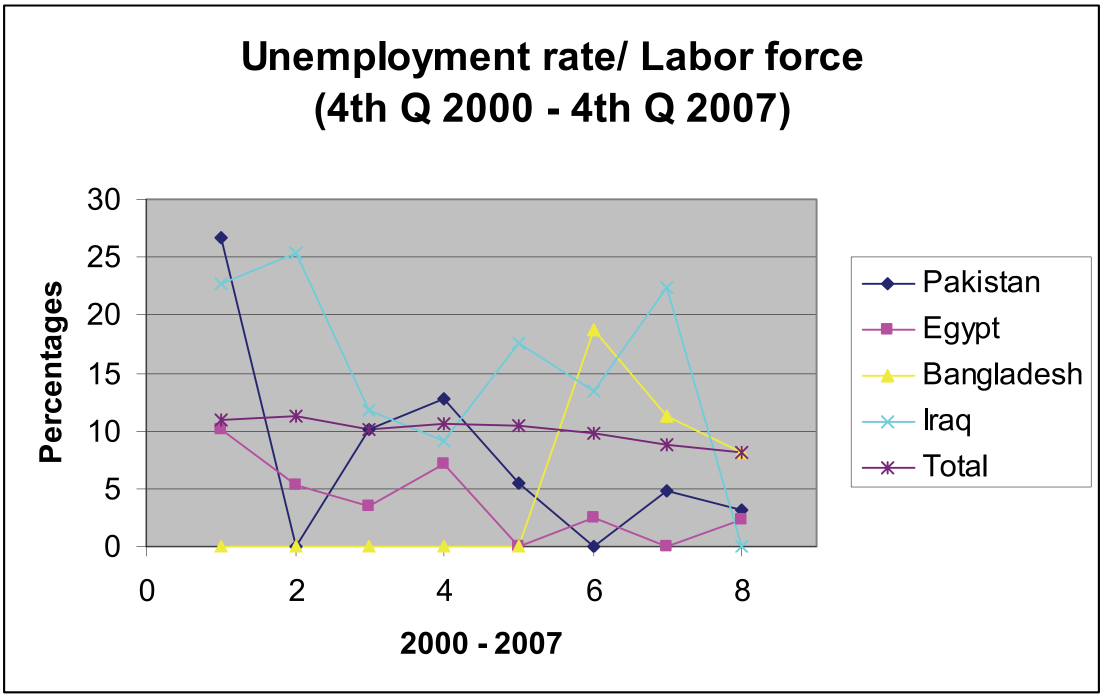
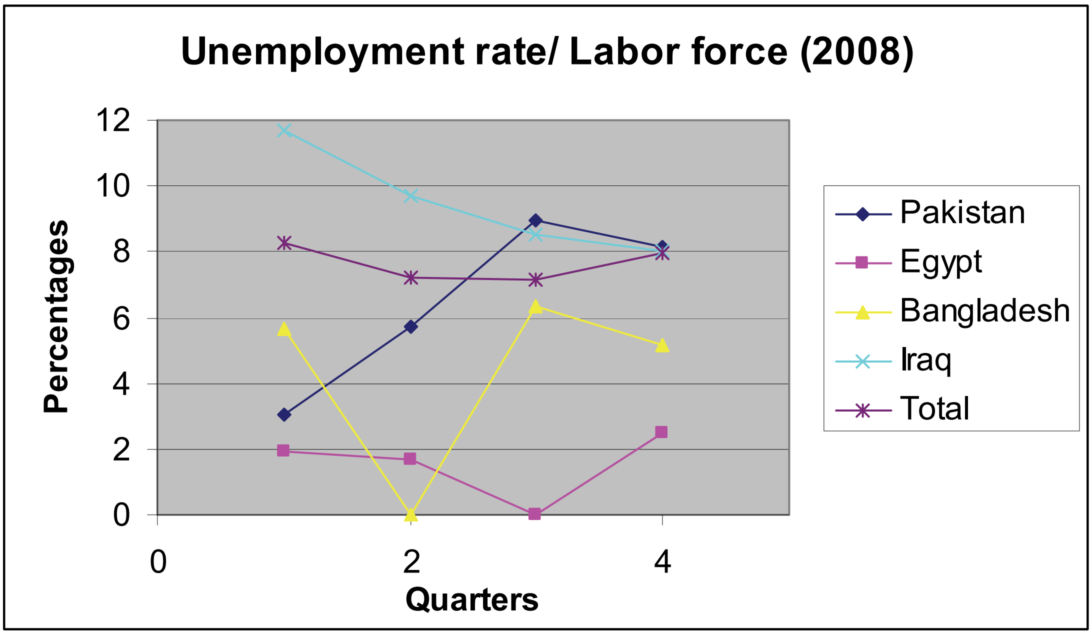


Figure 4.8 Unemployment rate per nationality for smaller immigrant groups (2008)



The data on employment and unemployment rates do not show any dramatic increase in the unemployment of natives or immigrants. Employment rates are slightly decreasing for all groups in 2008 except for Romanians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Iraqis. The respective unemployment rates for these nationalities show a slight decrease. Similarly while natives and most major immigrant groups' employment rates slightly decrease their unemployment rates also slightly increase with only a significant increase in the unemployment rate of Bulgarians for 2008.[5]

It is worth exploring whether the economic crisis has rather had an impact on wages than on overall rates of employment and unemployment.

Concerning data on average wages (see table 4.8 below), even though the differences between native and immigrant workers have decreased in terms of wages, still there is a considerable inequality between Greeks and non-Greeks. Wage inequality is smaller in the construction sector but it is more pronounced in the 'other services' category. If, in 2007, in the case of workers employed in constructions the average wage of an Albanian male reaches 85% of the average wage of a Greek worker, in the case of other services, the gap is, by far, greater. More concretely, in 2007 an Albanian man earned, on average 36% less than a native male worker. This gap appears to grow in 2008

[5] Data on employment/unemployment per nationality for the first and/or second trimester of 2009 will be available in October 2009.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Average Wage* by nationality

Nationality	2003				2004				2005				2006				2007			
	Enterprises		Constructions		Enterprises		Constructions		Enterprises		Constructions		Enterprises		Constructions		Enterprises		Constructions	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Greece	46,96	35,13	51,28	43,50	49,39	37,55	53,99	47,13	51,64	39,28	56,65	48,74	54,17	41,44	60,66	52,08	57,75	44,34	65,42	55,20
Albania	27,26	22,99	42,94	41,54	29,51	25,06	45,34	44,11	31,55	26,97	48,04	47,14	33,61	28,71	51,72	50,34	36,04	30,67	56,06	54,52
Russia	28,33	18,90	43,43	41,04	30,81	20,82	46,02	44,38	33,36	22,91	49,23	47,57	35,70	24,64	52,98	51,59	38,29	26,63	57,45	55,56
Pakistan	26,25	25,32	41,82	40,63	28,68	28,64	43,22	46,02	30,90	30,83	45,23	49,40	32,09	31,02	47,88	48,60	34,39	33,64	51,34	50,92
Bulgaria	26,76	17,50	42,16	43,75	29,06	19,46	44,66	42,80	31,53	21,37	46,52	44,87	32,78	22,75	50,40	48,57	35,77	24,85	54,20	51,88
Romania	28,44	23,45	42,23	42,30	31,35	25,42	44,90	43,99	33,38	27,69	47,64	47,19	35,20	29,08	51,80	50,17	38,46	31,75	55,68	54,82
Georgia	25,75	17,10	40,05	37,23	27,61	18,58	43,28	41,64	29,36	20,64	45,36	45,51	30,67	21,48	48,80	47,65	33,64	25,71	52,87	52,31
Ukraine	25,50	17,10	41,58	39,45	27,52	19,61	43,81	41,84	29,74	21,77	45,91	43,58	31,59	23,20	49,24	49,38	33,64	25,71	53,28	52,87
India	26,07	24,22	45,79	37,77	29,76	25,62	44,39	38,71	31,55	24,45	46,34	44,71	33,37	27,44	50,40	46,65	35,71	30,77	55,78	-
Moldova	18,25	19,91	41,42	66,38	26,87	20,15	41,99	42,58	29,56	22,62	44,63	42,13	29,85	24,28	48,05	45,51	32,95	26,75	52,11	54,59
Bangladesh	24,59	23,67	39,65	0,00	25,26	24,27	-	-	26,94	23,84	-	-	28,33	27,53	-	-	31,66	31,93	-	-
Poland	22,06	27,56	44,87	42,04	35,18	23,97	46,87	46,70	37,53	26,74	48,64	46,48	37,84	29,15	52,04	50,43	39,35	30,25	56,08	53,05
Total	**45,26**	**34,07**	**48,04**	**42,99**	**47,75**	**36,51**	**50,79**	**46,36**	**50,00**	**38,29**	**53,16**	**48,24**	**52,22**	**40,32**	**56,69**	**51,54**	**55,61**	**43,14**	**61,03**	**54,97**

Source: Social Insurance Institute (IKA): Monthly Reports for December 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007. Data for 2008 will be available in October 2009.

* When calculating average daily wage there were excluded Xmas, Easter bonuses and annual leave benefits.

* Average wage does not refer to distinct individuals as those with more than one employment, days and salary are not aggregated.

In conclusion, the economic context of employment/unemployment rates and average wage fluctuation show a slight impact of the crisis on the labour market with a small increase in unemployment rates for both natives and major immigrant groups. Since data for 2008 are not yet available, we cannot draw any conclusions on this aspect. It is worth noting however that wage differences are attributed to the length of employment of a certain worker, both in construction and in other services, and not simply to their nationality. Overall, foreign workers tend to have a shorter history of registered employment than Greeks and hence unavoidably receive lower wages. Having said this, there are indications (see also Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2010) that immigrants receive less than natives and that wage differences are less pronounced in construction – a sector that is now dominated by immigrants – than in other employment sectors. Thus, it may as well be that an increase in the wage difference between natives and foreigners in 2008 and 2009 suggests that migrants being more vulnerable to employer pressure 'prefer' to accept lower wages rather than risk unemployment. However, data for 2008 and possibly 2009 is necessary to draw any meaningful conclusion here.

5. The Policy Context of Migration in Greece

It goes beyond the scope of this paper to provide for a detailed overview and assessment of Greek migration policy. It is however necessary to outline the main lines of the immigration policy context in Greece during the last twenty years so as to put migration stocks and flows in context, both before the crisis and now.

The Conservative party, in power between 1990 and 1993, introduced Greece's first immigration law in 1991 (law 1975/1991). This law was mainly aiming at increasing border controls and facilitating expulsions – keeping if possible the country fenced off from migration flows. In the years that followed irregular migration towards Greece, mainly from the Balkans but also from central and eastern European countries grew exponentially. In the mid 1990s it was estimated that irregular migrants living and working in Greece numbered approximately half a million (in a country of nearly 11 million people). The first regularisation programme took place in 1998, under a Socialist government. Approximately 362,000 people applied but less than half of those managed to get a temporary permit valid for 1 or 2 years.

In 2001 the first comprehensive immigration law was also voted by a Socialist government. The law was accompanied by a second regularisation programme – 370,000 people applied in the context of this 'amnesty'. This law introduced a purely economic and instrumental perspective into the management of migration tying stay permits to the migrant proving s/he has work. Stay permits were and still are issued for 1 or 2 years only until a migrant has completed ten years of legal stay, after which they can apply for a stay permit of indefinite duration.

This law introduced also a system of annual quotas that were to be based on a yearly assessment of the needs of the Greek labour market (by region and by sector) in foreign workers. In line with this assessment which set a number of jobs to be filled, employers could file applications for inviting a migrant worker from abroad.

The invitation system has never actually worked as planned. The procedure for inviting a foreign worker is highly bureaucratic and time consuming. As a result the meeting of offer and demand is done informally, by networks of natives and migrants, operating in the labour market. Migrant workers usually arrive in Greece as tourists or to visit relatives and then overstay and abuse their visas. They then wait for the next regularisation programme to legalise their stay.

Nonetheless, this invitation system was maintained in law 3386/2005 brought to Parliament by a Conservative government, which revised the migration management and migrant integration framework, incorporating into Greek law also the EU directives on family reunification and on long-term resident status. It also introduced a single document, notably a stay permit for different reasons (such as work, study, family reunification, etc.) abolishing the previously existing work permit and stay permit. Law 3386/2005 introduced the third regularisation programme with about 200,000 applicants.

Migration law was modified again in February 2007 (law XXX/2007) with a view to simplifying some of its requirements for permit issuing and renewal. Some provisions of law 3386/2005 concerning the length of permitted police detention of illegally staying apprehended migrants and related issues were modified again most recently in July 2009. Nonetheless, law 3386/2005 and its further modifications have not significantly altered the philosophy of Greek migration policy. Notably the only legal migration channel for employment purposes remains the ‘invitation’ procedure based on the estimation of jobs available per region and per sector issued in June of each year. The related annual quotas are in the range of a few thousands per year and in any case the relevant procedure takes 12 to 18 months between the first request of the employer and the migrant worker’s arrival to Greece. Moreover, the rather high income requirements for family reunification (which would probably not be met by many native labourers either, especially in the low-skill sectors where migrants are concentrated) make also family reunification a rather impractical channel for legal migration.

As a result incoming migration flows to Greece are mainly irregular migration. An indication of these flows is given by the data cited above concerning apprehensions of irregular migrants at the borders. However, qualitative studies suggest that many migrants come also to Greece as tourists, with a tourism visa or a Schengen visa for Greece or for another country, or they also used to come from countries that did not need a visa to enter the Schengen area (this is particularly the case of Poles between 2001 and 2004, and of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens arriving in Greece in the period between 2002 and 2007).

In short the main features of Greek migration policy are the following:

- legal migration channels are basically non existent because of excessive red tape
- the system for matching offer and demand does not reflect the actual needs of the Greek labour market
- there is excessive red tape in both the issuing and renewal of stay permits
- there are high incentives and high offer of jobs in the informal labour market (construction, agriculture, tourism, cleaning, caring and catering)
- irregular migration has been a steady feature of immigration to Greece during the past twenty years
- regularisation programmes have been the main state policy to address the shortcomings of the legal migration and migrant integration system. People applying at regularisations were both newcomers and earlier migrants that had not managed to regularise in previous ‘amnesties’
- it is indicative of the level of the red tape of both legal migration channels and regularisation programmes that there are no data available as to how many regularisation applications were approved by each programme. The reason is that none of the three programmes was concluded in some orderly fashion. In reality each programme had important weaknesses that kept several tens or hundreds of thousands of people in ‘regularising limbo’ for months and even for years.
- Given their undocumented status immigrants find necessarily their first jobs in the informal economy. They then emerge into legality either through a regularisation programme or through family reunification. It is common that people fall in and out of legality during their stay in Greece because of the stringent requirements for renewing stay permits and the short duration of these permits (1-2 years). Practically immigrants are not ‘allowed’ to remain unemployed for the first ten years of their legal stay in Greece because if they cannot fulfil the employment requirements they lose their permits.
- Labour market inspections are scarce, especially in the sectors where migrants work (agriculture, construction and caring or cleaning work in private homes).

In conclusion, Greek migration policy is non existent as regards the management of legal migration. It rather comes ex post to regularise the stay and work conditions of foreigners that enter

Greece without papers. This policy has been followed by both conservative and socialist governments during the past twenty years – there has been no significant divergence between the policies of these two parties even though since 2004 the Socialist Party (in opposition) has taken a series of initiatives favour migrant integration and political participation.

This peculiar migration policy context shapes also the effect of the financial and economic crisis on immigration towards Greece. It is clear that the constant pressure on migrant workers to collect welfare stamps (used as proof of a formal employment relationship) and their actual need to work and earn money for themselves and their families in Greece and also for remittances to the home country make migrant workers particularly vulnerable to pressures from employers for working for lower wages and/or longer hours. Our data on wage inequality between natives and immigrants presented in section four point also to this direction.

At the same time, while the overall unemployment rate in Greece shows a slight increase during 2008, this increase affects natives and all major immigrant groups with the exception of Romanians. It is only Romanians and smaller national groups such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Iraqui citizens who register a decrease in their unemployment rate. Given that with the exception of Romanians, the other three groups come to Greece form Asia through the 'Turkish corridor' this finding suggests that out-going return migration flows are not likely to be registered from Greece to these source countries. Moreover, this suggests that probably incoming flows through irregular channels basically will also continue as the employment prospects in Greece do not seem to have worsened so much.

6. Concluding Remarks

Data available on immigration flows and on immigrants' performance in the labour market and in related markets of money (remittances) in Greece are at best incomplete. Nonetheless, the information gathered and presented in this paper sends a clear message. The impact of the economic and financial crisis on immigration flows to Greece is null or indeed very small.

Irregular migrants from Asia and Africa continue to travel via Turkey to Greece. Actually recent qualitative research (Lazarescu and Broersma 2009) suggests that some Asian immigrants also come to Greece via other EU countries in central and eastern Europe. There is no decrease in border apprehensions – they are steady or increasing. There is an increase in asylum seeking although this may not be related to increasing migration pressures. In short there is no indication that immigrants have stopped coming to Greece, whether they aim to stay in Greece or continue their journey towards the EU.

As regards the possible worsening of the employment situation and living and working conditions of immigrants in Greece as a result of the crisis – this is not fully documented but anecdotal evidence cited by journalists in early 2009 and data on increasing wage inequality suggest that while immigrant unemployment rate is slightly increasing for the major groups and decreasing for Asians, immigrants are pressured to work for longer hours for lower pay. However, ethnic inequality and discrimination is no news for the Greek labour market (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009) hence it is difficult to say to what extent such pressures for lower pay or worse working conditions are the result of the crisis or the crisis gives simply a pretext to unscrupulous employers. As noted earlier, it is the migration policy philosophy of Greece that actually holds legal immigrants hostages of the welfare stamps and the lack of labour market inspections in the sectors where migrants are employed that contribute in the long run for the hard working conditions of immigrants.

Naturally these are some first insights into the impact of the crisis on migration and migrant employment in Greece. It remains to be seen, in the latter part of the year, how employment rates have evolved over the second and third trimester of 2009 and whether there is an increase in unemployment rates, especially in particular sectors such as tourism or transport. It is our guess that the situation will develop along the same lines, notably there may be more de-regulation of the labour market and migrant workers will be among the first to pay the price of flexibility and adjustment to the economy fluctuations but it is less likely to see any out-going flows of migrants returning to their source countries. As regards the evolution of incoming flows, these are more likely to be affected by the current government policy of cracking down on irregular migration (which has more to do with the success of the extreme right wing party LAOS in the European election of June 2009 than with rising unemployment or the economic crisis) rather than by economic factors. The current harsh enforcement tactics with systematic raids in the centre of Athens and other large cities, the prolongation of police detention for illegally staying third country nationals up to 12 months, and the more intensive patrolling of the sea borders with Turkey are likely to divert (not stop) the flows to other routes, for instance through Bulgaria. It is not likely however in our view that incoming flows towards Greece, especially through the Greece-Turkey corridor will substantially decrease because of the financial crisis. If anything the crisis is felt more acutely in source countries, hence both the need and motivation of people to move grows.

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