

STATISTICAL DATA ON IMMIGRANTS IN GREECE:

AN ANALYTIC STUDY OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONFORMITY WITH EUROPEAN UNION STANDARDS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This scientific study was completed in November 2004 and it had two broad objectives:

- o to prepare the first-ever authoritative analytical report on immigrants in Greece, using all available datasources;
- o to map Ministry and other statistical datasets relating to immigration and immigrants, and to evaluate their potential compliance with the draft EU Regulation on migration statistics.

Datasets were requested from the following Ministries and state agencies:

- o Ministry of the Interior
- o Ministry of Labour
- o Ministry of Education
- o Ministry of Public Order
- o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- o National Statistical Service of Greece
- o IKA Foundation

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

1) Data concerning the extent of immigration [both legal and illegal] into Greece

Data concerning legal immigrants are held by several ministries, with poor communication between them, and there is no synthesis made of the different datasets. There is a particular problem of *homogeneis* who appear statistically as illegal immigrants until 2001, and for which category data are considered to be 'undisclosable' by the Ministry of Public Order. Ethnic Greeks without Greek citizenship also do not appear in the 2001 Census data, nor are there adequate data on the grants of Greek citizenship to them.

Using crude estimates of missing datasets, the number of immigrants in Greece is estimated for end 2004 at 950.000 *allogeneis*, including *homogeneis* making a total of 1,15 million and constituting some 10,3% of adjusted total population. This figure includes a minimum estimate of 190.000 *undocumented*[±] immigrants: it would be lowered by grants of citizenship to ethnic Greeks, and raised by the presence of a larger number of undocumented or illegal immigrants.

These figures contrast with an estimated total of 270.000 immigrants in 1991, showing a quadrupling of immigrant stocks over a period of 13 years. **Figure 1** illustrates the trends by category, and also indicating the complex synthetic methodology required to compile a total statistic.

[±] The term 'undocumented' is used precisely in this Summary to indicate non-possession [at a particular point in time] of the necessary legal documents for residence and/or work in Greece. It is **not** synonymous with the term 'illegal immigrant', stocks of which are considerably lower.

2) Regional location of immigrants in Greece

Reliable data on the geographical location of immigrants are available only from the 2001 Census. **Map 1** shows, at the level of municipalities, non-EU *allogeneis* immigrant presence as a proportion of local total populations. Immigrants are predominantly concentrated in economically successful regions of Greece: on some touristic islands (13-25%, typically), the Attika region and south western Greece, and the border with Albania. The lowest concentrations are in the North East, around Alexandroupoli.

The greatest cluster of immigrants is in the Municipality of Athens – some 132.000 immigrants at 17% of total population; Thessaloniki has the second largest with 27.000, but reaching only 7% of local population.

3) Characteristics of immigrant population from residence permit data

700 thousand permits were issued between July 2003 and October 2004. Valid permits apparently peaked in January 2004 at 509.000, and declined to 250.000 in September [see **Fig. 5**]: we believe these data to be incorrect, and that there are no reliable figures for total valid permits.

Nationalities of immigrants with residence permits show a marked increase of almost all groups compared with the Census data, especially Bulgarians, Albanians and Romanians. **Fig 6** shows a breakdown of major groups, although the number of nationalities legally residing in Greece exceeds 150. Comparison of Census data and residence permit data for national groups by broad geographical region [see **Fig 8**], shows a marked increase in nationals from Central Europe (mainly Albania and Bulgaria), along with small increases in the numbers from European New Independent States and Asia.

Reasons for the award of permission to stay are shown in **Figure 10**. 68% of permits were awarded for dependent employment, followed by 12% each for family reunification and self-employment. 92% of permits are of duration 1 or 2 years, 3% are given under EU rules to family members of EU nationals, and only 0,1% (364 persons) have indefinite permits out of the 700.000 awarded (see **Fig. 12**).

4) Employment of immigrants

Apart from the crude characteristics of dependent employment versus self-employment, the residence permit data cannot provide information on this point. The Ministry of Labour has no central data collection, and also cannot provide data. The only information available is from the Census 2001 and IKA. **Fig. 14** shows the self-declared sectoral work of male immigrants according to the Census. Albanians dominate the scene, with a presence in almost all sectors. Construction work is the largest sector for Albanians, but other nationalities occupy more specialised niches – e.g. Bangladeshi and Pakistanis in industry, Polish in construction, Bulgarians and Indians in agriculture. Female immigrants are less diversified, working mainly in "Other" which we assume to be housekeeping. **Fig. 16** shows the absolute values declared in the Census; although Albanians again predominate, there is a more significant presence of other national groups such as Bulgarian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian.

IKA data for 2003 confirm the picture of employment of male immigrants [see **Fig 20**], with construction constituting nearly 50% of all insured male immigrant workers, followed by retailing (7%) and hotels and restaurants (7%). Female employment is not so well reflected

by the IKA data [see Fig 21]: the very low level of insurance for housekeeping (20.000 persons) is an indicator of serious problems with social insurance in this sector. The largest sector in these data is that of hotels-restaurants, followed by housekeeping, "unknown", wholesale and "other business". Overall, the IKA data suggest that there are serious problems with the legal employment of immigrant women in Greece.

5) Recommendations for changes in data collection by the Greek state agencies

The Report concludes that Greek state agencies, at this time, are *unable to deliver adequate statistical data of the extent and quality specified in the draft EU Regulation*. Nine substantive recommendations are made, which are summarised below:

RECOMMENDATION 1: that all immigration data should be handled by one ministry, namely the Ministry of Interior, and that responsibility for *homogeneis* permits be removed from the Ministry of Public Order.

RECOMMENDATION 2: that the Ministry of Labour, which is currently unable to provide any data at all, should establish a central database with reliable mechanisms for inputting data from the regions. This is an expensive and long-term goal: in the interim, the possibility of using the Interior Ministry residence permit database should be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 3: that the Interior Ministry should reform its procedures for data-entry and correct the serious time-lag which currently affects all recent data concerning valid permits. Without such corrections, statistical data on legal immigrants do not adequately reflect reality and are therefore of unacceptable quality.

RECOMMENDATION 4: that the Interior Ministry should add to the data variables currently listed on the database, to make distinctions between applications for permits, first-time permits, permission change, renewed permits, and expired permits. Other variables required by the EU Directive include 'year of arrival in Greece', 'country of birth', 'country of previous residence', and 'country of next residence' [for those emigrating].

RECOMMENDATION 5: that the Interior Ministry upgrade its computer software to utilise data already recorded but inaccessible – namely, dependent children, age of permit holder, region of usual residence, and permit duration.

RECOMMENDATION 6: that the Interior Ministry should properly integrate its data on award of citizenship into a centralised database.

RECOMMENDATION 7: that the National Statistical Service should re-examine the 2001 Census data and attempt a 'statistical fix' for the problem of missing *homogeneis* in the foreigners data.

RECOMMENDATION 8: that IKA should examine its statistical provision and issue *post hoc* data to cover late "voluntary payments" made by immigrants.

RECOMMENDATION 9: the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Immigration Data Standards, in order to harmonise across the Greek state sector the collection, format and types of data requested from immigrants.