



MAPPING REFUGEE RECEPTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

FIRST REPORT OF THE EVI-MED PROJECT



16 JUNE 2017



Hal-Far reception centre, Malta, 29 April 2017.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By the end of 2015 an estimated 1,008,616 people had reached Europe by sea, more than 84% of them from refugee-producing countries and a quarter were children under the age of 18. This report examines what happened next and presents the results of a questionnaire on refugee and migrant reception administered to participants in Greece (300), Sicily (400), and Malta (50), followed by interviews with migrants (45) and key-informants (50) including government representatives, humanitarian agencies, NGOs and activists.

The findings illustrate marked variation between the flows to the two main receiving states, Greece and Italy, as well as Malta, and identify two distinct sub-systems characterised by significant differences in terms of the national and demographic composition of migrant groups, gender, age, and many social characteristics.

The impact on gender was significant. In Greece both men and women are present in more equal numbers (64% male to 46% female), than in Sicily. Women brought with them their children and were likely to travel with family members. In Malta, the presence of women is negligible. Significant differences are also visible in age, educational levels and occupational status with just over of 25% in Greece possessing a university degree.

The majority recorded that they fled persecution, war, famine, and personal insecurity. War was the biggest driver (48.7% in Greece; 23.6 % in Sicily; and 52.8 % Malta) though in Sicily higher numbers reported persecution was the main driver (48%). Only 18% described their motivation as economic. Often insecurity was magnified by other pressures such as inter-ethnic tension and gender-based discrimination and violence. The survey results also record shocking instances of abuse in transit, especially for those who had travelled via Libya. Over 50% had experienced arrest and or detention in transit and 17% were in bonded (unpaid) labour. We received further accounts of migrants, following their arrival in Sicily, being coerced into low paid work.

Although the Reception Conditions Directive sets out minimum standards for the treatment of those in need of international protection and the Common European Asylum System seeks to ensure comparable living conditions for applicants for international protection across the EU, 'reception' is not well defined. It is generally thought to start once an asylum application has been filed, though we found many unable to do so. Asylum-seekers and refugees in general are not treated as vulnerable persons; only certain sub-categories are singled out for eligibility for special protection including minors, unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, single parents of minors, victims of torture, rape or other forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence. There is a tendency to privilege protection based on past harm, such as disability, torture, and exploitation, or those who are more dependent on others, such as single parents with young children, or those who require additional support, e.g. pregnant women, the elderly or the disabled. Individuals with less visible markers such as victims of torture or with mental health problems may not receive priority processing or access to services.

Approaches to reception differ across the three states with 'hotspots' in Greece acting as closed detention centres, in contrast to 'hotspots' in Sicily where migrants spend little time. Unlike Greece, Italy does not have camp-like structures. Further differences may be partially explained by the countries' experience of asylum management. Yet, even in Italy which has long been a receiving and destination state with legislation in place, there is no uniform reception system and migrants may be placed in a number of institutions.

Living conditions in Italy were generally better than in Greece, where accommodation offered ranged from insecure camp-like structures to shared housing and were managed by a plethora of state and other actors. Doctors were present in centres, as were psychologists, though many claimed never to have seen one. Participants in Greece and Italy reported receiving legal assistance from NGOs to support asylum claims, though this was far from universal; on average only 50% of those surveyed claimed to receive such support.

Asylum applications increased during the research period. In Greece, the number of asylum applications in 2016 was three times as high as in 2015 (51,092 compared to 13,195). Most were still not 'in the system' as asylum seekers but were allowed to remain temporarily in the country. In 2016, an estimated 123,370 individuals applied for asylum in Italy; while a further 99,920 were pending by the end of the year. Less than 10% enjoyed refugee status. In Malta, the majority had subsidiary protection and were unlikely to gain full refugee status. While only a fraction of those in Greece said they were not planning on applying for asylum; almost 25% of those in Sicily and more than 40% in Malta said they had no plans.

Conclusions

The findings illustrate distinctly different reception systems operating in Greece, Italy and Malta. In Greece in particular, reception has been complicated by the multiplicity of actors involved and the challenge of responding to external pressures, including the closure of borders and relocation initiatives. As a result, migrants in Greece have been detained and left in camp-like situations; in Italy a permissive approach towards refused asylum-seekers has encouraged their informal integration through exploitative labour practices.

Yet, migrants in the reception system in all countries responded most positively to regularisation including the provision of communal living arrangements, stability and educational opportunities for their children. Such conditions are necessary for further life planning and successful integration.

Attitudes towards asylum reflects the composition of migrants in the selected states and a realisation that those not prioritised for relocation on account of their nationality and vulnerability status have fewer options. For those in Greece, separated from family elsewhere in Europe, it is likely there will be future movements.

Recommendations

1. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta, working with the European Union and its agencies, as well as the UNHCR and NGOs should treat refugees and migrants with dignity, respecting human rights and affirming their commitments under international and European Union law.*
2. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta should ensure that those in the reception system enjoy the full range of protection services, and information regarding the asylum and relocation processes.*
3. *The government of Greece should discontinue the practice of housing migrants and refugees in dangerous, inhumane and inappropriate reception centres.*
4. *The governments of Greece and Italy should affirm their responsibility for managing the reception process, recognising that uncoordinated efforts have complicated the effective management of the reception system and have had a knock-on effect on the relocation process.*
5. *The European Commission should instruct EASO to develop new guidelines to standardise and improve the quality of reception across the European Union, in consultation with UNHCR, to improve the reception experience and advance integration, including education and training provision.*
6. *The European Union and its partners must continue to work with the UNHCR to build capacity for the Greek government to manage arrivals, protect those in the reception process and asylum system.*
7. *The government of Greece should accelerate plans to support successful refugee integration by working with state, local and municipal agencies as well as NGOs and civic actors.*
8. *The government of Italy should take steps to correct the informal integration of migrants and prevent migrants falling into exploitative situations by regularising their status, even if only temporarily.*
9. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta should prosecute those who profit from the illegal exploitation of refugees and migrants in order to disincentive further corrupt and abusive practices.*
10. *NGOs and service providers working within the reception system should receive updated training, both technical and non-technical from UNHCR's partners and other experts in refugee protection to facilitate their interaction with asylum-seekers and to advance appropriate integration efforts.*
11. *The governments of Greece and Italy and the European Union institutions should coordinate more closely, providing specific information of those selected for relocation to facilitate integration.*
12. *The UNHCR, European Union and their partners should provide data disaggregated by gender so that service providers may better plan the delivery of support and integration services.*

Introduction

In April 2015, more than 800 people drowned off the coast of Lampedusa as they tried to cross the Mediterranean in one of the deadliest shipwrecks on record. Their deaths occurred during a period of increasing irregular boat migration from the Southern Mediterranean and a simultaneous flow of migrants crossing from Turkey to Greece. By the end of 2015, as we were preparing this project, an estimated 1,008,616 people had reached Europe by sea, more than 84% of them from refugee-producing countries including Syria (49%), Afghanistan (21%) and Iraq (9%) of whom 17% were women and 25% were children under the age of 18 (MSF 2017).

The refugee and migration ‘crisis’ prompted reporting and analysis from both operational humanitarian agencies including the UNHCR and IOM, as well as academics, including teams from the ESRC-DFID Mediterranean Migration Research Programme. Throughout this report we use the term ‘refugees and migrants’ to include both asylum-seekers and other third country nationals seeking international protection, which covers multiple statuses, as well as economic migrants. Research and policy studies have focused on incentives to curb irregular migration (Betts and Collier 2016; 2017); the nature of flows, including refugees, economic migrants, family migration and other forms of migration (Crawley et al. 2015; IOM 2017; ODI 2016; RMMS 2015; Squire et. al 2017; UNHCR 2017) and on legal approaches to protect migrants from human rights abuses (HRW 2016, 2017; Peers 2016). This work has provided much insight into the reasons and the risks that migrants and asylum seekers from different geographical areas and with different characteristics are prepared to take in order to reach Europe, however, these reports frequently do not tell us what happens next.

To date there has been little independent analysis of the system of migrant and refugee reception, even though the condition to protect people upon arrival features in the 1951 Refugee Convention, as well as a raft of EU legislation and policy statements, including the European Agenda on Migration. Furthermore, the European Commission has committed much funding to assist frontline states. In the past two years Greece, a country which has received over 800,000 refugees and migrants, has been granted more €356.8 million in emergency assistance, in addition to €509.5 million allocated under the national programmes included in the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund and Internal Security Fund (European Commission 2017a).

In order to explore and map the reception context, the research team proposed the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of migration flows across the Mediterranean? How are these changing?
- What are the different profiles, motivations, and experiences of those who migrate to Europe?
- How do migrants make their often complex and dangerous journeys?
- What is the impact of government policies on migration decisions and experiences along the route?
- What are the migrants’ experiences of arrival in the Mediterranean (including reception, assistance, pathways towards the rest of Europe)?
- What is the nature of international, national and local multi-agency systems of reception?

To address the above questions, the research team worked with local organisations in Greece (Greek Council for Refugees), Italy (Borderline Sicily), and Malta (People for Change Foundation) that assisted with the field research. The local teams administered a questionnaire to participants in Greece (300) Sicily (400), and Malta (50). The survey research was followed by in-depth interviews with migrants (45) and key informants (50) including representatives of government offices, humanitarian and relief agencies, NGOs and activist organisations.

This brief includes the findings of the EVI-MED project and offers an analysis of the systems of reception currently in use in Greece, Italy and Malta. It provides further recommendations for the European Union and Member States, especially Italy, Greece and Malta, in addition to international organisations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The Research Project

In June 2015 the research team conducted a preliminary visit to Malta (Valletta, Hal-Far) and to Sicily (Catania, Caltanissetta, Lampedusa, Palermo, Pozzallo) to observe the state of the search and rescue effort, the pressure on frontline states, and to gain more knowledge about the reception systems established in both countries. At the time the EVI-MED project was conceived, the nature of flows across the Mediterranean was shifting dramatically and there was a marked rise in spontaneous arrivals across the Eastern Mediterranean. The project team therefore decided to include Greece in its proposed study but to limit their investigation to the mainland, not the islands where much research activity was already taking place.

After an inception period in autumn 2015, fieldwork began in March 2016 concentrating on conditions facing migrants in Greece, Sicily and Malta. A survey was designed to gather information on demographic characteristics, migrant well-being, health and disability; routes taken and last country of residence; the use of agents, smuggling and means of arrival; experiences of the reception process and assistance provided; plans and expectations for the future. The sample population included third country nationals who had been unable to move on or were currently in the process of seeking asylum. To provide a more representative study, a sampling frame was constructed based on the most recent UNHCR's data on the nationality of migrants who had arrived.

The project also introduced a temporal dimension, with the aim of deepening the comparative analysis. Recognising the highly dynamic flows, especially before March 2016, and the fact that even after this date the stock of migrants fluctuated, the survey research was designed to be conducted over two periods during 2016. The rationale for dividing the research into two periods (wave 1: March - May 2016; wave 2: September - October 2017) was further justified on the grounds that it would provide a methodologically more sophisticated approach to understanding the way geopolitical pressures affected both the entry and exit of third country nationals. As explained below, the composition of the populations sampled in wave 1 differs noticeably from wave 2. In addition, by including in our study those who had reached Malta before 2016, the research team was able to provide further contextual information about the ways in which flows changed in the Central Mediterranean during a longer period.

Field locations were identified by the local research teams. In Greece, the research took place in Athens (Elliniko, Eleonas, Piraeus) and Thessaloniki regions (Diavata, Eidomeni). In Malta the research was conducted in Hal-Far, Marsa, Valletta; and in Sicily, research was conducted in Aidone-Enna, Bagheria, Caltanissetta, Catania, Cava d'Aliga/Scicli, Chiaramonte Gulfi, Palermo, Piazza Armerina-Enna, Ragusa, Siracusa, Vittoria.

In addition to the survey research, the research team conducted in-depth interviews with migrants and further interviews with key informants, in person and by phone, in Brussels, London and Rome, to gain more contextual knowledge about the treatment migrants had received and their experiences of the reception system. In a few instances, the research team oversampled some understudied nationals to gather more information about how their experiences of reception and their prospects, including asylum, relocation, resettlement, or eventual return, compared to groups that had been prioritised for international protection by the host state (above all Syrians). The aim of the stakeholder interviews was to learn more about the way in which reception operates in each country and feeds into the national asylum system and related policies, including the EU's relocation and resettlement programmes, further to the EU-Turkey deal and implementation of the Dublin Regulation which permits family reunification. At the time of interviews, the European Union was under pressure to reduce secondary movements and to make good on its promise of relocation. While the pace of relocations was initially criticised for being slow, the pace did quicken during the second part of the project. Interviews were therefore conducted with agencies including Frontex, the UNHCR and IOM and their partner NGOs and civil society organisations, government agencies responsible for search and rescue, immigration and asylum, as well as relocation officers from participating EU Member States.

Survey data were entered into a shared online system (QUALTRICS) and were cleaned to remove errors and address missing variables. This produced a dataset of 750 individuals which was analysed using SPSS to identify frequencies and to explore the impact of age, nationality, gender and health, among other variables, on the migrant experience before (i.e. in transit) and during the reception process. Interview data were transcribed and coded to explore key themes, as discussed in the following section.

Migration trends

Between 2015 and the end of 2016, Europe received over 1 million non-EU migrants -- third country nationals originally from Africa, Asia and the Middle East who reached Europe by boat. The background to these flows reflects geo-political tensions in both the Central and Eastern Mediterranean. We note that Italy and Malta were previously affected by the Arab Spring (2011) and the collapse of the Libyan state. While the majority of arrivals transited through Greece and Central Europe before making their way to host states, above all Germany, by early 2016 large numbers of migrants were blocked after the imposition of national border controls in several EU states and among the EU's neighbours. The effect of external and internal bordering has been to drastically reduce numbers entering Greece but with large numbers continuing to cross the central Mediterranean. Of the 71,933 sea arrivals from 1 January until 2 June 2017, there were 7,369 in Greece compared to 61,165 in Italy.

The decision by Hungary to build a fence along its borders with Serbia and Croatia in June 2015 was followed by further attempts at border management, often through coercive means. Shortly before the fieldwork began, Austria, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark and non-EU member Norway introduced passport controls. This was followed by the erection of fences along Bulgaria's border with Turkey, as well as between Slovenia's border with Croatia, and then in March 2016, along the Greek-Macedonian border by Eidomeni.

The inflow of migrants into Greece was further curtailed in March 2016 following the EU-Turkey deal, a multi-faceted pact which included a readmission agreement with Turkey and the promise of relocating a select number of asylum seekers across the EU and eventually also resettling a further 22000 people in need of protection from outside the EU to the EU Member States.¹ As a result of the border closures and the EU-Turkey deal, tens of thousands of migrants were contained in frontline states, including the more than 15,000 on Greek island 'hot-spots', or along the Western Balkan corridor in Serbia.

During the research period (March - October 2016), the UNHCR estimated that there were, at its peak 62,000 migrants on the Greek mainland, though NGOs estimated there may have been as many as 80,000. Unlike Greece, however, which was cut off as a result of the closure of the border with Macedonia and the EU Turkey deal (implemented March 2016), migrants continued to cross the Central Mediterranean. Following their interception by naval patrols or private search and rescue missions, they were taken to several ports in Sicily and occasionally other locations in Calabria where they could begin the process of seeking asylum. Although secondary movement was not uncommon, data on numbers intercepted and asylum applications provides a rubric to identify those who may have benefitted from the reception system. In Greece the number of asylum applications in 2016 was three times as high as in 2015 (51,092 compared to 13,195). An estimated 123,370 individuals applied for asylum in Italy in 2016; while a further 99,920 were pending by the end of the year.² The UNHCR records that in 2016 there were 176,000 people in reception centres across the country as of the end of the year.³ In the case of Malta, by 2016 there were no further boat arrivals, though some asylum seekers arrived by air including Libyan and Syrian nationals. The research therefore focused on those who were still in the asylum system, having received subsidiary protection or were without status. In 2016 there were 673 people in reception centres in Malta and 1,733 asylum applications under consideration.⁴

¹ While the European Council had accepted an initial relocation target of 120,000 people from Greece and Italy, this was revised down to of 98,255 in order to make room to accommodate some 22,000 people in need of international protection resettled from outside of the EU to the EU Member States. See: Council Decision (EU) 2016/1754 of 29 September 2016 amending Decision (EU) 2015/1601 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016D1754&from=EN>

² Asylum Information Database (2017), *AIDA - Italy: Statistics* <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/statistics>

³ UNHCR (2017), *Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants entering and crossing Europe via the Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes*. Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53994>

⁴ UNHCR (2017), *Malta - Asylum Trends*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/mt/charts/>

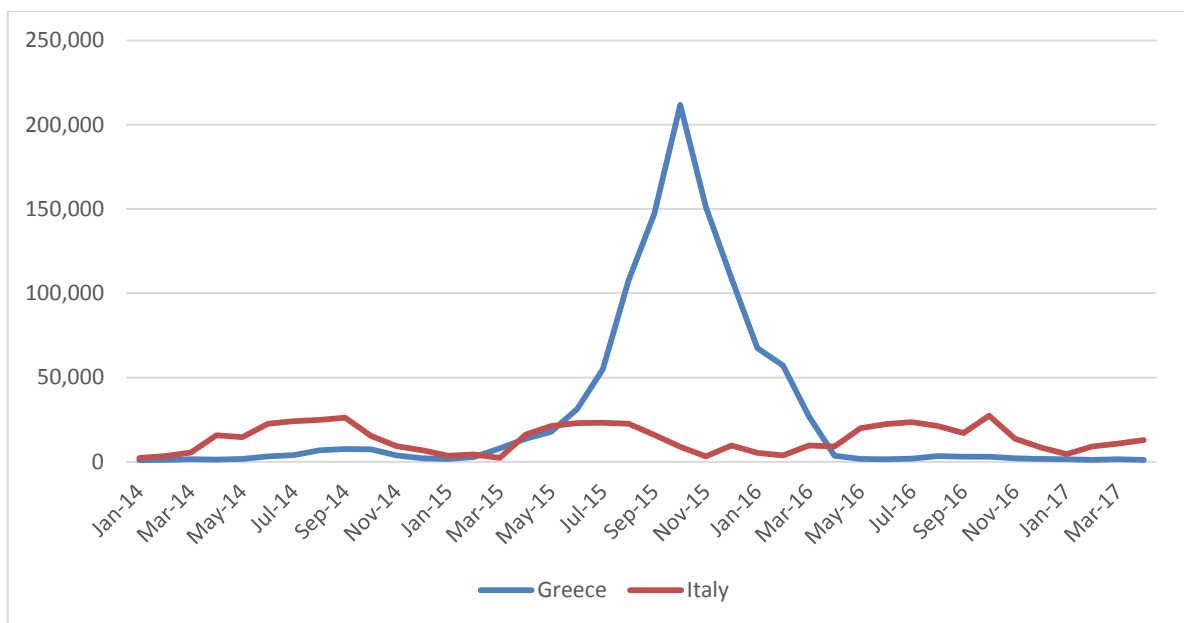
We should note that there was a marked improvement in the production of official data in the course of the reporting period. During the first stages of the project we relied on UNHCR’s data and other official sources including Eurostat as well as statistics produced by the national statistical offices of Greece, Italy and Malta. Frontex’s data though useful, came with additional complications, not least because they refer to the previous three month period and record each and every breach/interception/border crossing which may result in over counting. Many NGOs also produced useful datasets, above all, MSF. UNHCR’s documentation became more detailed and while there were some small differences between the data produced by the UNHCR and IOM, these narrowed considerably during the project. Yet, these data sources also included many limitations including the lack of gender disaggregated data, especially in the context of minors.

Variation and Differentiation

The research findings illustrate marked variation between the flows of the two main receiving states, Greece and Italy, as well as Malta. We note two distinct sub-systems characterised by significant differences in terms of the national and demographic composition of migrant groups, gender, age, and many social characteristics. These are explained below.

The differentiation occurs during a period of marked geopolitical developments which aimed to curb both inflows and outflows of migrants and refugees. Before the restrictions on entry to the Eastern Mediterranean and before the closure of the Western Balkans corridor, the volume of sea arrivals was increasing in both the Central Mediterranean and along the Aegean route, reaching 200,000 arrivals in September 2015 alone. The main nationalities who arrived and may be counted as ‘stock’ during the research period as listed by the UNHCR, were in the case of Italy, principally from West Africa and Eritrea; in the case of Greece, they included nationals from refugee producing states above all Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq; in addition to Pakistan. This profile contrasts with the small presence of migrants in Malta who were overwhelmingly from the Horn of Africa including Somalia and Sudan.

FIGURE 1 - Sea Arrivals in Greece and in Italy



Source: UNHCR / National Authorities in Italy and Greece

TABLE 1 - Sea arrivals in Greece and in Italy in 2016 – countries of origin

Italy		Greece	
Nigeria	21% (36k)	Syria	47% (80k)
Eritrea	12% (20k)	Afghanistan	24% (42k)
Guinea	7% (12k)	Iraq	15% (26k)
Cote d'Ivoire	7% (12k)	Pakistan	5% (9k)
Gambia	7% (11k)	<i>Other</i>	9% (15,000)
Senegal	6% (10k)	Total	171,785
Mali	5% (9k)		
<i>Other</i>	35% (63k)		
Total	173,008		

Source: UNHCR / National Authorities in Italy and Greece

The data show that the top four nationalities in Greece comprise 91 per cent of arrivals in 2016 while in Italy the top 7 nationalities comprised 65 per cent. This reflects the nature of mixed flows to Italy, heavily from Sub-Saharan Africa, above all West Africa in addition to Eritrea.

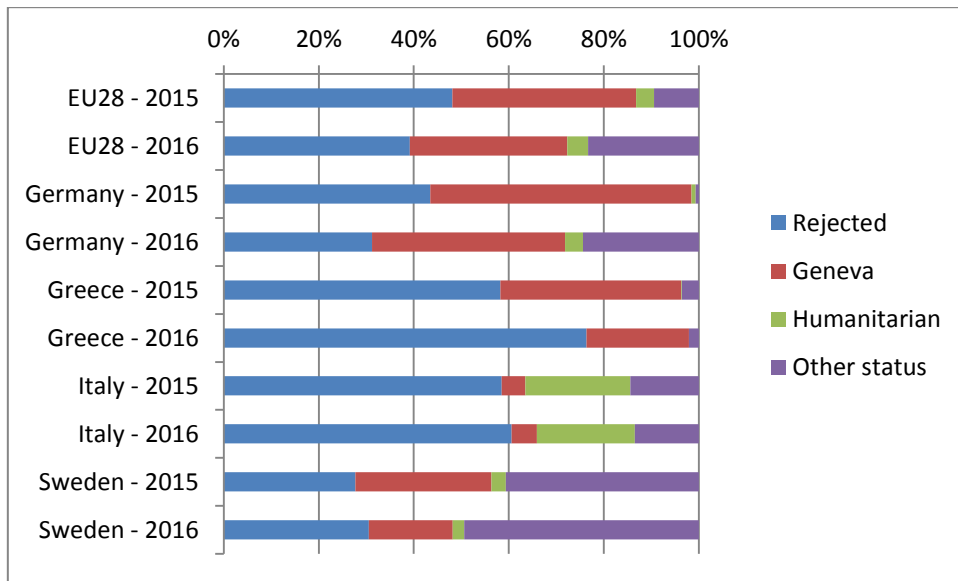


Migrants disembark in Catania, June 2015

As a result of the EU Turkey deal, there was a significant reduction in arrivals in the Eastern Mediterranean and an increase in the number of routes being used to reach Europe including a reopening of the Western Mediterranean route from Morocco as well as departures from Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt.

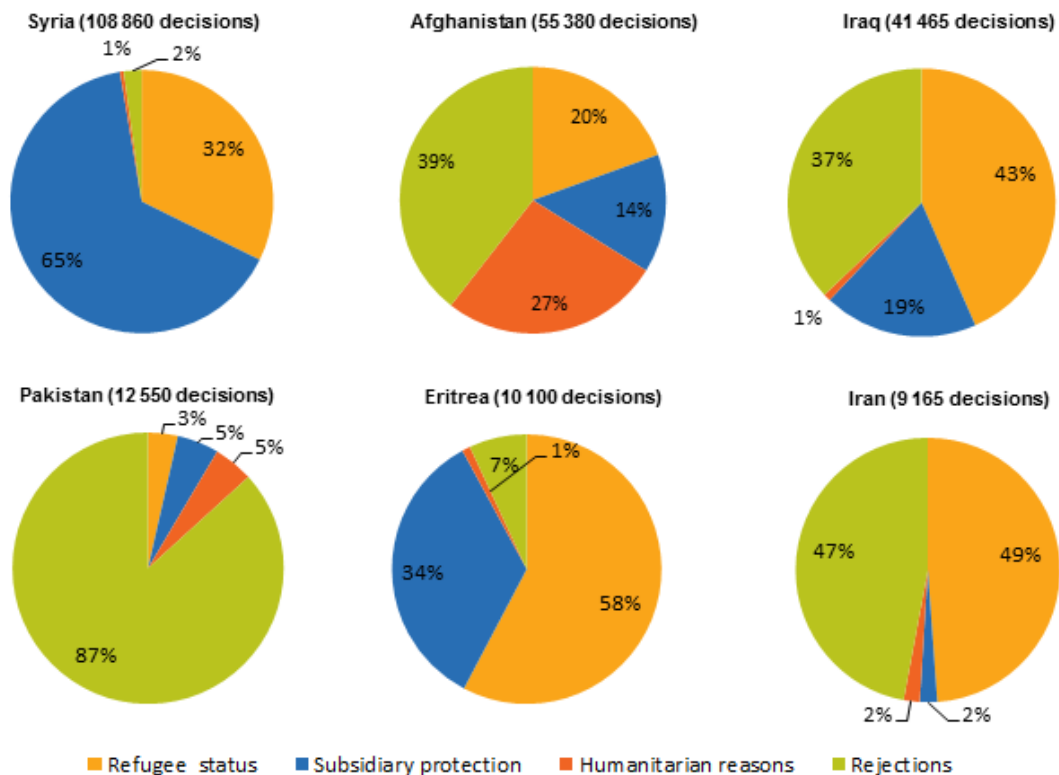
There was also a marked shift in the recognition rates for asylum-seekers during the research period. In 2015, an estimated 97.2 % of Syrians and 89.8% of Eritreans received asylum. Some countries also prioritised particular nationalities for asylum; for example Italy recognised a greater percentage of Eritrean claims than other Member States. As recorded in Table 2 below, recognition rates, changed as Member States became increasingly more selective with the introduction of both European policies and tighter restrictions on entry.

FIGURE 2 - First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex – Yearly data (rounded)



Source: Eurostat May 2017

FIGURE 3 - First instance decisions in the EU-28 by outcome, selected citizenships, 4th quarter 2016



Source: Eurostat May 2017

As a result of these geo-political developments, and national preferences, the project captured a diverse collection of migrants. Even though the research team used a sample framework based on UNHCR's data, there were notable differences in terms of counting migrant and refugee arrivals and stock in the context of reception. The survey gave the following breakdown of nationalities.

The EVI-MED data

The flow of migrants is highly differentiated across the selected countries. One defining characteristic of flows is the spread of nationalities, with Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians and Syrians almost exclusively present in Greece and absent from Sicily and Malta. Nationals from Nigeria, Gambia, Mali and Eritrea are heavily present in Sicily and are conversely absent from Greece. Only Pakistanis are present in large numbers in both Greece and Sicily.

TABLE 2 - Participants by survey country and country of birth main countries⁵ (with over 5% within at least one country)

Country of birth	Survey Country			Total
	Greece	Sicily	Malta	
Syria	33.8%	1.0%	...	14.0%
Nigeria	1.7%	23.2%	3.7%	13.2%
Gambia	...	15.5%	7.4%	8.7%
Pakistan	11.6%	6.7%	1.9%	8.3%
Afghanistan	14.2%	1.2%	...	6.3%
Iran	13.6%	...	...	5.4%
Somalia	0.3%	1.5%	57.4%	5.0%
Mali	...	7.2%	7.4%	4.4%
Eritrea	.7%	6.2%	7.4%	4.1%
Iraq	8.6%	...	...	3.4%
Others	15.5%	37.5	14.8%	27.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE 3 - Participants by survey country, wave and country of birth

Country of birth	Greece			Italy		
	1	2	Total	1	2	Total
Wave						
Syria	30.6%	34.6%	32.6%	.5%	1.5%	1.0%
Nigeria	1.9%	1.3%	1.6%	21.8%	24.5%	23.1%
Gambia	...	...	...	17.8%	13.0%	15.4%
Pakistan	11.3%	11.1%	11.2%	10.4%	3.0%	6.7%
Afghanistan	13.1%	14.4%	13.7%	2.5%		1.2%
Iran	14.4%	11.8%	13.1%	...	...	...
Somalia		.7%	.3%	.5%	2.5%	1.5%
Mali	...	...	...	6.9%	7.5%	7.2%
Eritrea	1.3%		.6%	1.5%	11.0%	6.2%
Iraq	8.8%	7.8%	8.3%	...	...	...
Other	18.8%	18.3%	18.5%	38.1%	37.0%	37.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The project team also noted variation among the nationalities of migrants and refugees in reception during the research period which affirmed the ongoing complexities of the geo-political and humanitarian situation in the Mediterranean and in source countries. We note in particular the increase in Eritreans and Guineans further to increasingly levels of instability of those countries while the number of Nigerians and Syrians also rose.

⁵ Other nationalities with sizeable presence in the Italian sample include: Guinea (5%); Ghana (4%); Senegal (3.7%); Egypt (3.5%); Ivory Coast (2.7%).

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

More telling was the impact shift in gender. In Greece over summer 2015, the percentage of women and accompanying children began to increase which is reflected in the difference between the two sets of participants ('stock'), where the presence of men in Sicily greatly outnumbers women, the situation in Greece is remarkably dissimilar and reflects a pattern of family migration recorded elsewhere in the surveys. Where in in Sicily the presence of predominantly single young men between the ages of 18-30 accounts for the majority of arrivals, we note that in Greece both men and women are present in more equal numbers (64% male to 46% female), and that the age range is greater. It was not just that there are more women in Greece but that they brought with them their children and were likely to travel with family members. In Malta, the presence of women is negligible.

Survey participants by country, gender and age

The largest presence of migrants by nationality and gender is in Greece where almost 70 per cent of Afghans were male. Syrians by gender appear almost in equal numbers (51% male; 49% female). In Sicily, while over all the population concerned is largely male, there is a sizeable percentage of Nigerian females (almost 40%).

FIGURE 4 - Participants by country of arrival, gender, age and wave

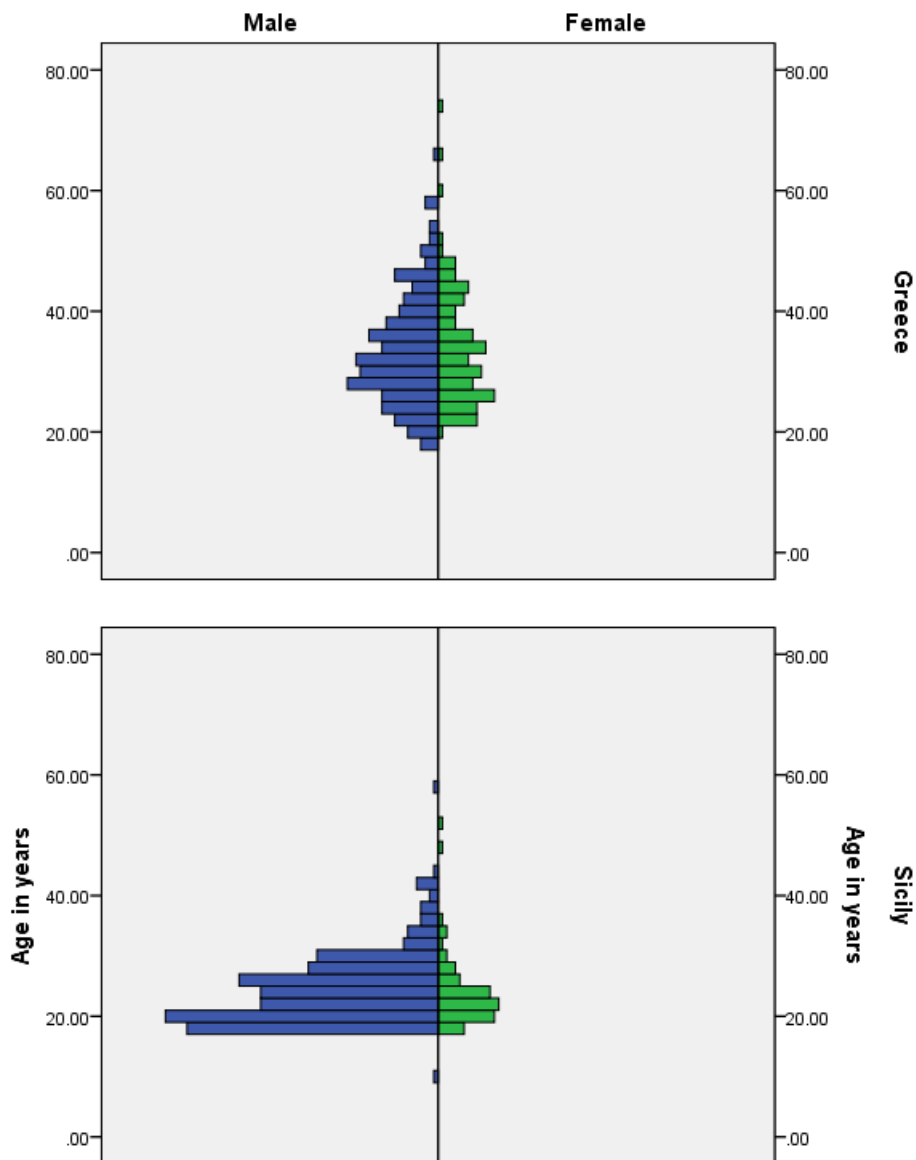


TABLE 4 - Participants by survey country, country of birth, and gender

Survey country		Male	Female
Greece	Afghanistan	69.8%	30.2%
	Syria	51.0%	49.0%
	Total	63.9%	36.1%
Sicily	Gambia	96.8%	3.2%
	Nigeria	60.2%	39.8%
	Total	84.6%	15.4%
Malta	Total	98.1%	1.9%

Significant differences are also visible in educational levels and occupational status and sector. In Greece the survey sample is much more highly educated than in Sicily or Malta with just over a quarter possessing a university degree. In Greece a higher percentage are or either employed full-time or housewives. While a third are employed in management, professions or service occupations, a fifth are in unskilled occupations. In Italy a much larger percentage are students reflecting the youthful age of the sample.

TABLE 5 - Participants by survey country, and highest level of qualification

Level of qualification	Greece	Sicily	Malta	Total
None	8.6%	18.7%	7.5%	13.9%
Primary	22.8%	33.7%	24.5%	28.7%
Lower Secondary	13.2%	23.4%	20.8%	19.2%
Upper Secondary	27.1%	20.4%	41.5%	24.6%
Undergraduate degree	25.7%	2.5%	3.8%	11.9%
Postgraduate degree	1.3%	1.2%		1.2%
PhD	0.3%			0.1%
Other (please specify)	1.0%		1.9%	0.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE 6 - Participants by survey country, and occupational status

Occupational status	Greece	Sicily	Malta	Total
Student part time	2.3%	1.8%	3.8%	2.1%
Student full time	5.6%	15.6%	30.2%	12.6%
Self-employed	11.6%	11.0%	7.5%	11.0%
Employed part time	6.3%	9.2%	7.5%	7.9%
Employed full time	44.9%	39.6%	32.1%	41.2%
Unemployed	9.2%	13.6%	15.1%	11.9%
Housewife	17.8%	7.2%		11.0%
Not looking for job / Inactive	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%
Other (please specify)	0.3%	0.3%	1.9%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE 7 - Participants by survey country, and occupation sector

Occupational sector	Greece	Sicily	Malta	Total
Management, business, and financial occupations	5.7%	0.4%		2.8%
Professional, scientific, and intellectual occupations	23.7%	7.3%		14.4%
Service occupations (software, IT, etc.)	5.2%	3.0%	4.8%	4.1%
Office and administrative support occupations	2.8%	3.4%	4.8%	3.2%
Sales and related occupations	9.0%	18.5%	28.6%	14.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	5.7%	23.2%	14.3%	14.8%
Construction and extraction occupations	5.7%	7.7%	4.8%	6.7%
Production occupations	3.3%	3.9%	9.5%	3.9%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	7.1%	15.0%	19.0%	11.6%
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.1%	6.9%	9.5%	7.1%
Unskilled occupations	20.9%	2.1%	4.8%	10.8%
Armed Forces	3.8%	8.6%		6.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The accounts of participants interviewed detail the occupations held by the participants and the main breadwinners in their families. The range is considerably broader than can be captured in the above table and presents some insights into the diverse economies of the sending states from which participants originated.

One Syrian participant described how he had worked as a lawyer for three companies, while the wife of another interviewee had been a judge in Syria, her husband working for an oil company. Other professionals interviewed included specialist doctors, such as paediatricians, as well as both male and female nurses and hospital staff, many working near the front line in Aleppo. A Kurdish participant, originally from Iran, worked as a civil engineer in Iraq until Islamic State destabilised the area where he had been living. His experience was mirrored by another Kurd who worked in construction in Shengal province, Iraq.

One young Guinean described how as a student he enjoyed a more casual unpaid job assisting his family.

I used to go to the market. I used to live with my uncle. He used to have shops there; he was selling clothes, so I use to go by his side to help him some of the time. It wasn't a job under contract no, I used to help voluntarily. It was free because it was my uncle, he was funding my studies. We lived together so sometimes during the holidays I used to go there with him to help him in the shop with the clients that he received. It wasn't a job I was getting paid for. I was doing it voluntarily mostly because I wanted to learn commerce with him (Guinean man, aged 18).

Another Pakistani reported that working in the family business meant travelling abroad in order to increase economic opportunities.

As the table 7 records, many worked in manual but skilled jobs such as mechanics or in car production. Several worked in construction and continued to do so in Turkey, in transit, as described in the section below.

It should be noted that occupational data are especially important because they inform the relocation process. All of those interviewed who had been selected for relocation to another EU Member State explained that their occupational status was considered alongside cultural and linguistic factors during the process of matching them to participating countries. As one Syrian former hospital employee explained

We were informed that none of countries we had chosen offered us the chance for an interview. So, Slovenia was our only alternative. We had the interview with the Embassy under a very tensed environment. The officials asked us about the Syrian history, about our professions and occupations, about the way we left Syria, about the time we stood in Turkey, about our mentality regarding our children's teenage life and attitude, about our religious conviction etc. (Syrian man aged 47, Greece).

Journeys: Departures, Transit and Arrival

The data further record that the overwhelming majority of participants were in fact forced migrants fleeing persecution, war, famine, and personal insecurity. One Syrian interviewed in Greece put it simply - 'I used to live with my wife in Idlib. We had a normal life there until the outbreak of war. Our house was bombed and we lost everything. After that we hadn't any option but to leave our country' (Syrian man, aged 47). In addition to refugees fleeing Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, several spoke about how conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Sierra Leone drove them out in search of security.

Some participants in Greece spoke about how they fled Islamic militants including the Taliban in Afghanistan and Daesh/IS in Iraq. Often insecurity was magnified by other pressures, including inter-ethnic tension and gender-based discrimination and violence. As one Afghan woman from small village reported:

'In June 2015 my father was pressed by the Taliban to offer me or my sister to them. He asked them for a couple of days in order to be prepared and decide which of us had to go. In the meantime I went with my sister to my uncle's family in Kabul. When the Taliban returned and did not find us, my father was killed. Immediately after this incident my mother joined us and after a few days we left the country to save our lives. We couldn't think to stay in Afghanistan because now we are a family without a male, which means that we have no protector. We cannot work, we cannot go out alone, we cannot survive without a male' (Afghan woman in Greece, aged 26).

Fear and insecurity drove our participants to Europe in large measure, though a minority reported that they had come for purely economic reasons and even fewer for personal or post-materialist reasons like travel or study. Even in Sicily, where the prevailing discourse suggests that it has attracted largely 'mixed flows' of migrants, participants described their reasons for leaving involuntarily. Only 18 per cent described their motivation as economic. This finding affirms other research which claims that most of those who reached Europe during the research period were drawn by 'push' rather than 'pull' factors and represent a predominantly asylum-seeking population.

TABLE 8 - Why did you leave your last country of residence? (% within country)

n.b. respondents could select up to 3 options, so totals do not add to 100%

	Greece	Sicily	Malta
War	48.7%	23.6%	52.8%
Persecution or targeted violence	37.4%	48.9%	24.5%
Concerns regarding family security	45.4%	42.9%	17.0%
Environmental disaster/famine	0.7%	5.3%	0.0%
Health care needs	3.0%	5.3%	1.9%
Work related	10.3%	10.3%	3.8%
Economic reasons	16.6%	18.3%	5.7%
Education	2.0%	2.8%	3.8%
Family reunification	7.6%	1.5%	0.0%
Exploring Europe	1.0%	1.5%	1.9%
Other	5.0%	2.8%	35.8%

How and why people reached Italy, Greece and Malta is a more complicated story and many of those surveyed reported they had no control over their eventual destination. This was especially the case for those who took the Central Mediterranean route and journeyed via Libya. Some West Africans had hoped to work in Libya which was relatively stable at the time when they began their journey. As one Senegalese migrant reported,

'Well I am here [Sicily] but it was not my option to come here. My initial choice was to go to Libya...I found myself stuck in Libya, I could not go home. I can guarantee you that amongst us, whether it be a refugee or an economic migrant, 95% of us are stick against our own will. Once you arrived in Libya it's better for you to cross the Mediterranean Sea than to turn your back to save your life. He explained that often people were obliged by forced to leave at the risk of death' Senegalese male aged 18).

Some participants were simply caught up in the 'crisis' as a result of personal accident. For example, one female from Morocco who married to a Syrian in Turkey in 2016 arrived in Greece with her husband where she gave birth. While he was entitled to be relocated and travelled on to France, she was left behind in Greece on account of her nationality. Another Palestinian woman was 'Dublined' - returned under the Dublin Convention - from Norway to Malta where she too was due to give birth while her husband remained in Norway.

In the case of the African migrants in Malta, few actively sought to be there but arrived accidentally by boat following inception at sea. Their situation contrasts with Libyans who reached Malta by plane. Yet, for many others, their port of entry was largely determined by ease of access. Those who reached the Greek islands and were eventually moved onto the mainland considered it to be a transit point. Almost 63% of respondents of our respondents recorded that they never intended to remain in Greece but had hoped to move on.

TABLE 9 - Why did you choose [country of arrival]?

N.B. Respondents could select up to 3 options

Explanations for country of arrival	Greece	Sicily	Malta
Economic reasons (cheapest option)	5.7%	2.8%	5.7%
Most convenient /easy to reach	43.3%	17.1%	1.9%
Close to my country	4.3%	7.2%	0.0%
Transit station for somewhere else	62.7%	7.8%	0.0%
I know someone who can help me (friends...)	10.7%	4.4%	1.9%
I have family members here	5.3%	3.9%	0.0%
I did not choose/I had no alternative	7.0%	63.6%	75.5%
Other (please specify)	6.7%	.8%	15.1%

Experiences in transit

The survey results also record shocking instances of abuse, especially for those who had taken the Central Mediterranean route and travelled via Libya and across the Sahara before boarding vessels for Sicily. Over 50% had experienced arrest and or detention in transit and 17% were in bonded (unpaid) labour. One Guinean recalled how Libyan rebels tore up his documentation and threw him in jail for two weeks. As he admitted, 'I had no clue that in Libya people were being imprisoned, brutalised, killed and tortured. For example, people who tried to escape from prison were shot dead right away in the most inhuman[e] ways. They were slaughtered. I witnessed people being beaten up to death'. Accounts of kidnapping, abuse and imprisonment were not uncommon. A man from Cote d'Ivoire spent one year and nine months in a Libyan prison.

Over half of the participants who transited through Sicily (52%) reported that they experienced mistreatment during their journey, in contrast to 16.4 % in Greece. One West African migrant even recounted how he was stabbed by a policeman in Libya. Explaining to the team interviewers how he received a noticeable scar, he provided the following account:

I had in while I was in prison; it was a policeman that stabbed me there. He asked me...that was a Thursday morning, on a Thursday morning, there was a 6 square metre room, we were 138 in this room, 138 in a 6 square metre room, 6 square metre I am telling you, we were 138 confined in this room...what we did... there were hours where you would need to go toilets especially around midday, if you needed to go toilet, you would need to wait up to 7 PM or even the next morning (Senegalese man aged 18).

Others were detained upon arrival. This was most pronounced among migrants from the Horn of Africa in particular said they experienced arrest or detention in transit in Sicily and Malta. It should be noted that Malta has now outlawed the use of immigration detention and overwhelmingly migrants are now housed in open centres. This statistic therefore looks backwards to a different period.

While some participants were working as they made the journey across Africa, others explained that they were coerced to pay smugglers for their onward travel.

TABLE 10 - Were you in employment in any of the transit countries?

In employment (yes/no)	Greece	Sicily
Yes - Paid employment	13.0%	31.7%
Yes - Unpaid employment	0.7%	17.6%
No	86.3%	50.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

One man from Cote d'Ivoire reported that two weeks after arriving in Libya he was working on a construction yard until he was seized by immigration police and imprisoned.

For others, especially those who had initiated their journeys earlier however, work was simply a means of paying for their onward travel. As one Moroccan graduate in English literature who had left her country in search of a better life, explained:

We arrived in Turkey in January 2016. In Turkey I had the chance to work for about 2 months as a street seller. The amount of 6,000 euros my father had to pay the smugglers, was not enough for me to continue the trip to Europe. So, I had no way but work for a while and find the way to leave (Moroccan woman, aged 26).

TABLE 11 - Did you pay for your journey?

Pay for journey (yes/no)	Greece	Sicily
Yes - Money	94.0%	65.5%
Yes - In Kind (e.g. through work)	1.0%	16.8%
No	5.0%	17.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

This above table supports the interview findings which record that many more migrants principally from Africa worked in-kind, often under exploitative conditions, to pay for their journey across the Mediterranean. The prevalence of smuggling and in some reported cases trafficking along the Central Mediterranean route in Libya and elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa is further evidenced in the interviews.

Reception - legal foundations and practice

The principal obligations on EU Member States to protect asylum seekers are recorded in Union's common policy on asylum, immigration, visa and external border controls based on Title V (Area of Freedom, Security and Justice) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (European Union 1997) and in the recast asylum acquis, including but not limited to the Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection. Of particular relevance is the Reception Conditions Directive which sets out minimum standards for the treatment of those in need of international protection.⁶ The idea of reception itself is not a well-defined concept though it has been interpreted in European human rights case law.

Within the European Union, we note that the Charter of Fundamental Rights sets out rights and freedoms including the right to asylum under Article 18. As far as reception systems are concerned, the CEAS seeks to ensure comparable living conditions for applicants for international protection throughout the EU. Although the European Agenda on Migration pays little attention to reception explicitly, the necessity for reception is covered under the third pillar which seeks to strengthen the common European asylum policy and stresses the need for policies to be 'based on solidarity towards those needing international protection as well as among the EU Member States, whose full application of the common rules must be ensured through systematic monitoring'.⁷ EU law considers that one enters the reception system from point of application; and one exits the reception system once a decision has been made. However, our own research records that this paradigm is too simplistic. Recognising that some people may be denied the right to apply for asylum, especially in Italy, and that others may remain in the reception system even after receiving the grant of asylum, this project takes a pragmatic view of reception. We suggest that the Reception Conditions Directive permits the enjoyment of rights to: freedom of movement; shelter; education for children under 18; the protection of particularly vulnerable asylum seekers; and a limited right to work. We further suggest that reception begins not from the point that protection is formally provided by the host state, but from the point of an individual in need of protection being admitted to the protection system.

The Reception Conditions Directive has also come to specify which groups are particularly vulnerable and in need of additional protection. In *Case 30696/09, M.S.S v Belgium and Greece* (2010), the European Court of Human Rights broadened the concept of vulnerability to asylum seekers. It ascertained that the applicant had been homeless for months and had not been provided with food or a chance to wash. It noted that at no time had the applicant been duly informed of the methods of finding accommodation that were available to him. According to the Court, Greece had therefore failed to provide for his basic needs and had thus failed to take due account of the applicant's vulnerability as an asylum seeker. Further, in *Case 29217/12, Tarakhel v Switzerland* (2014), the Court reiterated that applicants for international protection are considered a 'particularly underprivileged and vulnerable' population group, even more so when children are concerned, requiring 'special protection' under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Reception facilities and reception conditions have to be adapted to the age of the children and in compliance with the principle that a family should be kept together whenever possible has to be ensured.

Effectively, it has not been asylum seekers and refugees in general who are treated as vulnerable persons; only certain sub-categories are singled out for eligibility for special protection. In the *Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection*, vulnerable persons are listed as minors, unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, single parents of minors, and victims of torture, rape or other forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence. Subsequently vulnerable status was extended to victims of human trafficking and FGM. Member states are required to identify those who fall into a vulnerable category so as to respond to their needs (Shreeves 2016). Vulnerable groups are similarly defined in the Greek legal framework, but which has

⁶ Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:180:0096:0116:EN:PDF>

⁷ European Agenda on Migration - https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration_en

also specified persons suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as shipwreck survivors or relatives of victims, and victims of trafficking.

As we can see from the pre-registration data collected in Greece from June to the end of July, and which is probably the most comprehensive recording available, unaccompanied minors, largely male, form the largest group followed by single parents with minor children and pregnant women.

TABLE 12 - Vulnerabilities by type and gender in Greece

Vulnerability	Male	% of total	Female	% of total	Total no.
Unaccompanied minors	1009	29	209	6	1218
Single parents with minor children	104	3	627	18	731
Pregnant women/recently given birth	0	-	522	15	522
Incurable or serious diseases	174	5	174	5	348
Disability	209		104	3	213
Elderly	104	3	139	4	243
Post traumatic disorder	39	1	39	1	78
Torture	39	1	10	0.3	49
Rape or serious exploitation	10	0.3	17	0.5	27
Total	1688		1841		3481

Source: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Interior and UNHCR pre-registration data analysis 9 June - 30 July 2016

Among the vulnerable categories listed, there is a tendency to privilege protection based on past harm, such as disability, torture, and exploitation, or those who are more dependent on others, such as single parents with young children, or those who require additional support, for example, pregnant women, the elderly or the disabled. These categories are the most visible and easily identifiable. Because of the failure to identify those designated as vulnerable early on, it is likely that individuals with less visible markers such as victims of torture or with mental health problems do not receive priority processing or access to services that they require. For men, who are expected to be independent subjects, fitting into a vulnerable category is particularly difficult although gender neutral categories such as the disabled, the elderly and those with serious and incurable illnesses are populated by both genders.

In addition, the UNHCR grades reception conditions based on the following criteria and provisions.

TABLE 13 - Reception conditions criteria

<p>Protection including: safe spaces for children; restoring family link services; legal counselling/information provision; mediation to prevent tensions with host community or between communities on site.</p> <p>WASH including: the provision of toilets; separate toilet areas for women; showers, including showers with hot water and facilities separated for women; water taps on site; hygiene promoters; regular cleaning of wash facilities; garbage disposal waste management</p> <p>Food provision as ranked by: frequency of meals; types of food provided (hot, sandwiches, dry food); nutritional screening; separate facilities for breastfeeding.</p> <p>Health provision as ranked by: distance to nearest health facility; the availability of psychosocial programmes and health referral service</p> <p>Communications including access to internet, charging plugs; two way communications system</p> <p>Information - including information regarding: health services; relocation; asylum procedures; food distribution; shelter allocation; restoring family links; UNHCR services and local NGO services.</p>
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Modalities of reception

We note that approaches to reception differ across the three states and that these differences may be partially explained by the countries' experience of asylum management. For example, in contrast to Greece, Italy which has long been a receiving and destination state has had legislation in place for over a decade that provides for the creation of the reception institutions where asylum seekers are housed. Yet, in practice, there is no uniform reception system in Italy and migrants may be placed in a number of institutions.⁸

In Italy, migrants are first intercepted and then brought to either closed hot-spots (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Trapani) or disembarkation centres which are predominantly based in Sicily and on mainland Italy in Calabria, though search and rescue ships have docked elsewhere too. During the journey migrants are effectively profiled by age, nationality, and their health assessed while on board the ship. This initial profiling bears on their opportunities for reception.

The formal reception system is multi-layered and includes centres that provide first aid and assistance near sites of disembarkation (CPSA); collective centres or institutions set up under a specific Ministerial Decrees for asylum-seekers (CARA); and a second reception phase where individuals who have already filed an application for asylum are housed in reception centres managed by local authorities (SPRAR). In addition, the government set up Extraordinary Reception Centres (Centri di accoglienza straordinaria) (CAS) to address the shortage of places in first and second reception centres but these have become the main form of reception. There are an estimated 600 SPRARs hosting 23,000 people while the (CAS) are more than 3000 and host 137,000 (February 2017). Whereas the Italian Red Cross (Croce Rossa Italiana) screens new arrivals, as migrants enter the reception system, they may come under the operational responsibility of a host of actors sub-contracted to provide services on behalf of national and local authorities.



Medical screening following the disembarkation of migrants in Pozzallo, 19 June 2015.

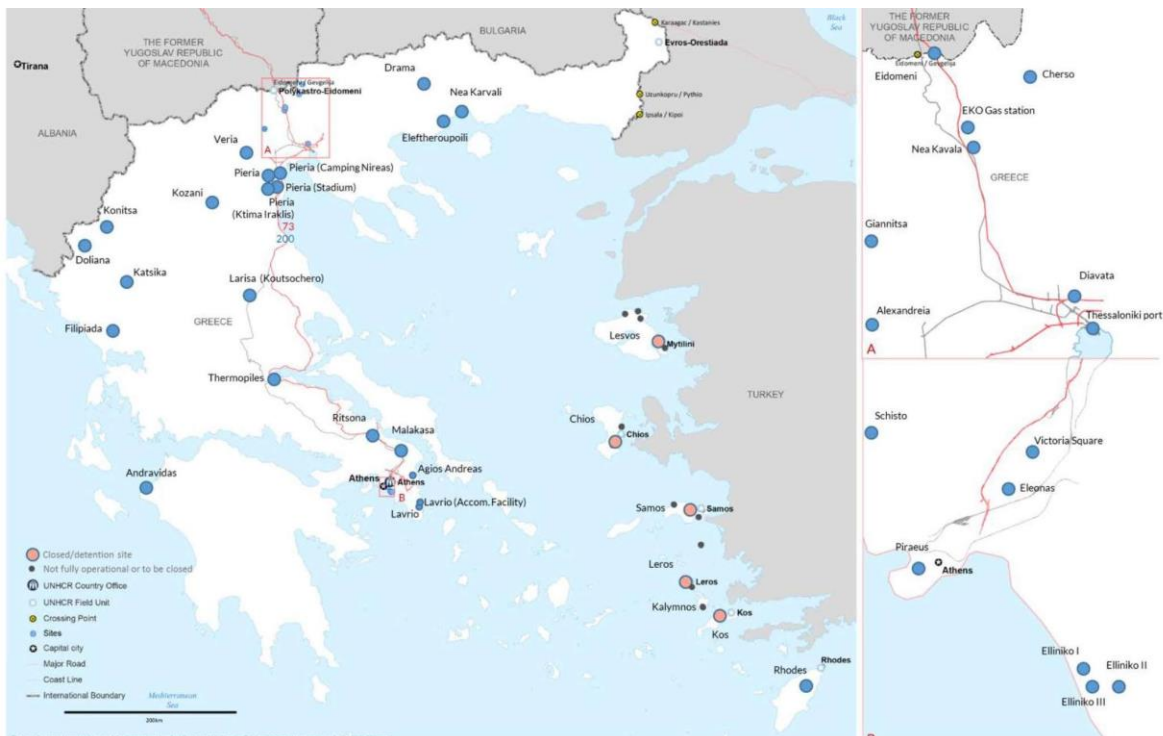
⁸ Asylum in Europe Country Reports Available at: <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/reception-conditions/short-overview-italian-reception-system>



A reception centre for asylum seekers (CARA) in Caltanissetta, Central Sicily, June 2015.

In Greece migrants first enter the reception system on the islands, many of which have become hotspots (Chios, Kos Lesbos, Leros, Samos) since the EU-Turkey deal. While some are transferred to the mainland (7,583 from 1 June 2016 to April 2017), others find themselves trapped in overcrowded accommodation. Refugee centres on the mainland, though formerly under governmental control, are operationally managed by a diverse range of actors including both humanitarian agencies (UNHCR, International Rescue Committee), and other state institutions including the army and air force. Reception centres are spread across the country and residents of these camps tend to be separated by nationality. The map below shows the spread of reception centres during the peak of the crisis. Many of those listed refer to camp-like settings.

FIGURE 5 - Reception centres in Greece, April 2016



The management of refugees and migrants proved to be especially challenging in the camp like structures where people were housed. The UNHCR recorded marked differences between these structures too, with migrants housed in these structures suffering from overcrowding, lack of access to separate facilities for washing, in addition to limited access to lawyers and education. Though some of these structures are no longer in operation, major problems remain with remote accommodation in the north of Greece and substandard accommodation and ad hoc sites such as Elliniko, the old Athens airport, due to be closed.



'Arrivals' - a camp settlement at the former airport, one of three camps in Elliniko, Athens 7 July 2016.



Migrants camped by the port of Piraeus; many more took shelter in tents under the fly-over, 7 July 2016.

Since summer 2016, asylum-seekers are increasingly being placed in shared accommodation, both state-controlled and private. UNHCR has financed an urban accommodation scheme on the mainland primarily for those waiting to be relocated and/or classified as vulnerable. Since its inception, 27,742 individuals have benefited from the scheme with 17,081 being housed in April 2017 (UNHCR Greece Factsheet April 2017).

In 2016 Malta ended the practice of automatic immigration detention and the former detention centre in Marsa has since been converted into an open reception centre and the centre in Hal-Far is also open.



One of three open reception centres in Hal-Far, 29 April 2017.

Third country nationals in Malta enjoy a mix of legal statuses as a result of changes in the asylum law. In practice they tend to receive subsidiary protection. In addition, Malta recently received relocated asylum seekers including 52 Eritreans, 27 Syrians and 1 Iraqi who had been relocated from Italy (47) and Greece (65).



Hal-Far centre for families, previously occupied by British military personnel, 29 April 2017.

In spite of the change of law, it is important to note that newly relocated individuals from Greece are detained at Hal Far for up to five days for medical screening.

Migrants in the reception systems

In addition to reception centres which function much like refugee camps, asylum-seekers are increasingly being placed in shared accommodation, both state controlled and private. However, we found that in many cases, there was no difference between certain types of reception centre; for example in Italy the differences between SPRAR and CARA were not evident.

TABLE 14 - What type of accommodation do you currently live in? (% within country)

Type of accommodation	Country			Total
	Greece	Sicily	Malta	
My own flat/house	31 10.4%	7 1.8%	5 9.4%	43 5.7%
Private room (in a shared flat/house)	39 13.0%	11 2.8%	19 35.8%	69 9.2%
A bed in a shared room	19 6.4%	2 .5%	16 30.2%	37 4.9%
Centre for refugees and migrants (e.g. CARA, CAS, 'Hub', SPRAR)	93 31.1%	330 82.5%	10 18.9%	433 57.6%
Hostel for homeless people	12 4.0%	16 4.0%	0 0.0%	28 3.7%
Sleeping rough	8 2.7%	4 1.0%	0 0.0%	12 1.6%
Tent / camp	47 15.7%	9 2.3%	2 3.8%	58 7.7%
Other (please specify)	50 16.7%	21 5.3%	1 1.9%	72 9.6%
Total	299 100.0%	400 100.0%	53 100.0%	752 100.0%

Most of those interviewed had experienced multiple types of accommodation. In Italy, participants described how they had been moved from small villages to towns and in some cases cities like Catania where they lived in multiple occupancy rooms which were 'good enough'. Unaccompanied minors spoke about how they received language instruction in Italian. In addition to activities including sport, they received and phone cards.

Living conditions in Italy were in marked contrast to those visited in Greece which ranged from insecure refugee camp structures to shared accommodation. Syrians were prioritised in Greece where the situation remained fluid throughout the project. In the case of accommodation, the research team witnessed some truly shocking living conditions in Elliniko (Athens) where Afghans were housed in the disused airport, football and hockey stadiums and lived inside in tents or makeshift partitioned spaces. For some this had been an improvement, as one Afghan participant said she had previously been forced to live in one of 70 tents outside the camp because she did not have a 'special stamp'. As a result she and the other tent dwellers were initially denied food and access to the camp. Being moved into the camp brought other challenges. Accounts of violent crime and fears of gender-related violence were also reported. In other parts of mainland Greece, refugees were housed in better conditions; while many had lived in tents in camp-style settings, eventually air-conditioning units were installed in many and residents were gradually moved into apartments and shared living spaces with support from NGOs like Praxis.

Participants also reported on the services they received in the reception system. Doctors were present in both camps and in centres as were psychologists, though many respondents claimed never to have seen one. The

participants in Greece and Italy did talk about the legal assistance they received, principally from NGOs to support their asylum claims, though this was far from universal and on average only fifty percent of those surveyed claimed to receive such support.

The situation in Malta stands in sharp contrast to both Greece and Italy, not least because of the limited capacity but also because of general uncertainty by the state regarding long term planning with respect to asylum and integration.

TABLE 15 - Do you receive legal support? (% within country)

	Greece	Sicily	Malta	Total
Yes	52.0%	50.1%	21.6%	48.9%
No	48.0%	49.9%	78.4%	51.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Overall, legal support was provided in the first instance by NGOs, though the Greek Asylum service significantly increased capacity to deal with asylum claims during the reporting period and more support was given. This was reported in the increase in asylum applications as described below.

Legal status and plans

In Italy and Malta, the majority of respondents had applied for international protection and enjoyed some status. In Italy we found most had applied for asylum, though the numbers who enjoyed refugee status were less than 10 per cent. In Malta, by contrast, where participants had been living for longer, the majority had subsidiary protection and were unlikely to gain full refugee status.

In Greece, where asylum processing was initially very slow, the majority were still not ‘in the system’ as asylum seekers though they were allowed to remain temporarily in the country, as illustrated in Table 17 below. Some participants had been selected for relocation and the research team managed to interview others who had been relocated from Greece to Malta with their families.

For some, their adjustment to Malta was complicated by their previous experience of being ‘small islands’ in Greece where they felt trapped and had no opportunity. In all cases they were still uncertain about their future in Malta, a country they did not know. One recently relocated man recorded that he had followed a friend’s decision to go to Malta. He then explained:

Malta is very nice for tourism, travel...but not for me. Everyday I take my bag looking for a job. If I cannot find a job in Malta I will try another way. I am here to make a good future. I sent my papers to 28 companies. Then UNHCR told me the Refugee Commission may reject my claim. I may only get subsidiary protection (Syrian father, 3 May 2017).

Equally, we found the Maltese authorities adapting to the situation of having received several complex medical cases - unexpectedly, without advance notice from the authorities that organised the relocations from Greece. This presented a number of operational challenges for case workers and the asylum service.

TABLE 16 - Legal status (responses by country across the 2 waves)

	Wave				Wave		
	1	2	Total		1	2	Total
Greece				Sicily			
Asylum seeker (i.e. already applied for asylum)	19.9%	32.0%	25.9%	Asylum seeker (i.e. already applied for asylum)	64.2%	31.5%	47.9%
Refugee (status recognised)	.7%	.7%	.7%	Refugee (status recognised)	8.0%	1.0%	4.5%
Humanitarian permission		.7%	.3%	Humanitarian permission	10.9%	11.0%	11.0%
Subsidiary protection		1.3%	.7%	Subsidiary protection	1.0%	2.0%	1.5%
Refused asylum seeker	1.3%	.7%	1.0%	Refused asylum seeker	9.0%	2.5%	5.7%
Irregular	18.5%	12.0%	15.3%	Irregular	2.0%	.5%	1.2%
Temporary suspension of deportation	49.7%		24.9%	Temporary suspension of deportation			
Asylum seeker - currently applying against a commissions denial		8.7%	4.3%	Asylum seeker - currently applying against a commissions denial		23.5%	11.7%
Asylum seeker - Dublin case		36.7%	18.3%	Asylum seeker - Dublin case		.5%	.2%
Other (please specify)	9.9%	7.3%	8.6%	Other (please specify)	.5%	13.5%	7.0%
I do not know				I do not know	4.5%	14.0%	9.2%
<hr/>				<hr/>			
	Wave				Wave		
	1	2	Total		1	2	Total
Malta				Total			
Asylum seeker (i.e. already applied for asylum)	3.8%		3.8%	Asylum seeker (i.e. already applied for asylum)	39.8%	31.7%	36.0%
Refugee (status recognised)	3.8%		3.8%	Refugee (status recognised)	4.7%	.9%	2.9%
Humanitarian permission	7.5%		7.5%	Humanitarian permission	6.4%	6.6%	6.5%
Subsidiary protection	66.0%		66.0%	Subsidiary protection	9.1%	1.7%	5.7%
Refused asylum seeker	11.3%		11.3%	Refused asylum seeker	6.4%	1.7%	4.2%
Irregular				Irregular	7.9%	5.4%	6.8%
Temporary suspension of deportation				Temporary suspension of deportation	18.5%		9.9%
Asylum seeker - currently applying against a commissions denial				Asylum seeker - currently applying against a commissions denial		17.1%	7.9%
Asylum seeker - Dublin case				Asylum seeker - Dublin case		16.0%	7.4%
Other (please specify)	3.8%		3.8%	Other (please specify)	4.4%	10.9%	7.4%
I do not know	3.8%		3.8%	I do not know	2.7%	8.0%	5.2%

We note from the above that there was a marked increase in applications for asylum in Greece between wave 1 and wave 2. The reasons for this increase include the closure of borders, the fact that many respondents found Greece to be sympathetic and 'friendly' and above all of increased capacity in the state asylum service. In addition to the increase in numbers of applications, we also see a rise in appeals and Dublin cases. These trends were further reflected in both interviews and the survey which recorded a marked difference in terms of participants' plans to apply for asylum.

Those reporting that they were planning to apply in their country of reception differed considerably. A majority in both Greece and Sicily were planning to apply in a different country - unlike those based in Malta were universally rejected the idea, probably because they were both ineligible for relocation and had no other alternative, should they wish to remain in a EU host state. While only a small fraction of those in Greece said they were not planning on applying for asylum; almost a quarter of those in Sicily and more than 40% on Malta said they had no plans. This reflects the composition of migrants by nationality and sizeable proportion of non-asylum seeking populations in the Central Mediterranean as opposed to Greece.

TABLE 17 - Are you planning to apply for asylum? (by wave and country)

N.B. This question was asked only to those who had not applied for asylum yet (see previous table)

Planning to apply for asylum		Wave		Total
		1	2	
Greece	Yes, in this country	19.5%	37.9%	23.2%
	Yes, in a different country	78.8%	48.3%	72.5%
	No	1.8%	13.8%	4.2%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sicily	Yes, in this country	40.9%	16.3%	24.6%
	Yes, in a different country	22.7%	65.1%	50.8%
	No	36.4%	18.6%	24.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Malta	Yes, in this country	57.1%		57.1%
	No	42.9%		42.9%
	Total	100.0%		100.0%
Total	Yes, in this country	24.6%	25.0%	24.8%
	Yes, in a different country	66.2%	58.3%	63.6%
	No	9.2%	16.7%	11.7%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The desire to apply for asylum in all three countries indicates a sense of pragmatism and realisation that participants currently have few options available. It is likely, especially for those in Greece, a number of whom are separated from family members elsewhere in Europe, that there will be further movement in the future.

TABLE 18 - Where do you see yourself in one year's time? (By country)

Where do you see yourself in one year?	Greece	Sicily	Malta
Stay in this place	34.1%	45.8%	43.1%
Move to another place but in the same country	0.3%	27.1%	0.0%
Move to another country in EU	62.2%	19.5%	17.6%
Move to another country outside EU	2.3%	3.5%	39.2%
Return to your country	1.0%	4.1%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

We should note that while relocations have increased - 18,418 in total; 5,711 from Italy; 12,707 from Greece, this figure is below the targets set and applies only to certain nationalities (European Commission 2017b).

Conclusions

The research project was designed in response to a call from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under the 'Urgency Grants Mechanism' with fieldwork taking place during a rapidly changing environment. The fluid situation brought with it a number of challenges for the research team but also offered the opportunity to investigate the temporal realities of migrant flows and the effects of corresponding geopolitical pressures on the management of both inflows and the reception system.

The closure of internal borders within the European Union in February 2016 and the agreement reached between the EU and Turkey sealed off the Eastern Mediterranean route to all but a handful of migrants and had a substantial impact on the management of the reception system. The research team capitalised on the new situation to identify the differentiating effects of international policy on the reception experience, including the change in the composition of flows and stock as well as applications for asylum.

During the reporting period, the composition of flows changed substantially, as it has since the research was completed. The research team was well placed to explore the ways in which external factors influenced the management of reception and addressed key gaps in our knowledge, for example in the reporting on the gendered effects of migration. Just before the fieldwork began when the borders of Macedonia and Serbia remained open we note that the numbers of women and children reported to be on the move was significantly higher in the Eastern Mediterranean, with the gender ratio near parity; during the reporting period the number of female migrant arrivals dropped. Capturing up to date information on gender dynamics is essential for the planning and delivery of appropriate support services.

The EVI-MED data demonstrates that the systems for refugee and migrant reception that developed during the current 'crisis' are themselves highly differentiated. We note in particular key differences across Greece, Malta and Sicily in terms of the nationalities of migrants and their socio-demographic profiles. Whereas Greece received many more migrants travelling as part of a family unit from refugee producing states, above all Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, in addition to labour sending states like Pakistan, both Malta and Sicily overwhelmingly took in migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, here too there was a noticeable difference in terms of composition. We found a significant Somali and Sudanese presence in Malta, but not in Italy or Greece. The fact that these migrants had initiated their journeys earlier than participants sampled in Italy and Greece illustrates the dynamic nature of outflows. Whereas these nationalities crossed the Mediterranean in large numbers before the 2015 crisis, within a couple of years other groups dominated flows to Italy.

The research findings further underscore that volatile situation in Libya and elsewhere in Africa generated new and unanticipated flows across the Central Mediterranean, which was reflected in the range of nationalities and presence of principally single young males in Sicily. Those in Italy and Malta arrived by chance or as a result of the deteriorating conditions in Libya which propelled them towards Europe. In the Eastern Mediterranean, while participants selected Greece as a transitory point and stepping stone to Western Europe. Migrants who journeyed via Libya reported a situation of great danger and uncertainty which drove them to cross the Mediterranean, often under duress and the threat of death. Their accounts record the prevalence of smugglers who required migrants in Libya to work for their passage and is indicative of the wider situation facing younger and poorer migrants from Africa. Their experiences stand in contrast to those who arrived across the Aegean.

The management of the reception system in each country is informed by the relationship between the state, the European Union, and their maturity as asylum receiving countries. Italy is by far the most advanced of the three states, with legislation establishing a refugee reception system having been introduced more than a decade ago, in contrast to the asylum systems of both Malta and above all Greece which had been condemned in a 2011 European Court judgment. One important difference between the three systems was the absence of camps in Italy, in spite of the presence of hundreds of thousands of migrants. Unlike Greece where migrants were detained in hotspots, in some cases for more than a year, migrants in Italy were processed and moved on quickly to second level reception centres. In Malta the small number of boat arrivals since 2013 influenced the change in immigration policy, with detention, except in certain circumstances outlawed last year.

The living conditions facing migrants in all three countries varied significantly. The worst situation recorded was in Elliniko where the researchers witnessed some truly inhumane conditions. Elsewhere in Greece, the situation was much better. Overall, however, participants who were taken out of camp structures and housed in shared flats reported higher degrees of satisfaction with their living conditions. The degree to which states had fully implemented the EU migration acquis, above all the Reception Conditions directive also varied. We note that in all three countries access to psychological services was limited as was access to legal services. Some of these gaps were filled in by NGOs but on an ad hoc basis. Minors under the age of 14 enjoyed access to schooling in Greece, but for only half a day and there was no provision made for older children.

In both Greece and Italy, the research teams encountered a multiplicity of implementing partners in the reception system, though the channels of management differed considerably. In Greece, the reception system was managed by the UNHCR and governmental ministries, with large numbers initially contained in refugee style camps allocated to a set of stakeholders who dealt with the day to day operations. This included governmental agencies, the military, police, as well as major international NGOs. In practice though, the UNHCR was the dominant actor. By contrast, in Italy the state worked through national agencies and Italian chapters of international NGOs such as the ICRC, Oxfam, and Save the Children as well as smaller organisations and even social enterprises. While some of those operating reception centres in Italy came under criticism, there was generally more accountability than in Greece where a plethora of international NGOs and activist groups appeared to provide services, sometimes with little to no coordination.

In all three countries, participants explained that they did not set out to stay in the receiving state and that their life plans changed during the course of the year. Asylum and recognition rates increased, reflecting both the result of the border closures and migrants being more pragmatic about their plans for settlement, even opting for states which they had previously not identified as final destination countries, such as Greece. This is noted in the data from wave 1 and wave 2 which record a marked increase in asylum applications. By contrast, many of those who arrived in Sicily later moved out of the reception system. We note the asylum rejection rate of 60 per cent in Italy. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of those refused did not leave the country but self-relocated within Italy where they were most probably absorbed into the informal economy.

The research concluded at a point of stabilisation in the Eastern Mediterranean but with flows increasing in the Central Mediterranean. The latest UNHCR estimates of sea arrivals in Italy since January 2017 is now 63,951, and appears to be increasing. Reflecting on the above research findings, and in recognition of these trends, the following conclusions may be drawn.

The current approach of profiling migrants on the basis of nationality to determine rights to asylum is limited and risks undermining human rights commitments. As the interview data records, many individuals reported claims of persecution which might not have been picked up by a collective approach to refugee status determination and the vulnerabilities framework in use. Rather individual claims should be heard and used as the basis for determining asylum and the concept of vulnerability broadened to direct services accordingly.

Refugee reception systems must be enhanced to respond to the changing dynamics of inflows and external pressures including the closure of borders. This entails moving people out of detention and camp-like situations as quickly as possible, in the spirit of the Reception Conditions Directive. While there is capacity in Italy, the permissive approach that encourages informal integration may put migrants at risk of exploitative labour practices. Such tolerance is no substitute for rights-reinforcing policies of integration.

Migrants in the reception system responded most positively to communal living arrangements which offered the possibility a secure resting place. Such conditions are necessary for further life planning and active participation in the subsequent integration process. While the research team did not investigate the integration process of asylum seekers in Greece, Italy and Malta, it records that much valuable time is lost during the reception process and that undermines opportunities for successful integration. Recognising that asylum applications are increasing in Greece, further coordination of essential services and the provision of education and training is required to advance integration.

In anticipation of secondary movements, further to family reunification, and with the pace of relocation from Italy and above all Greece increasingly, the above concerns will also need to be considered by other EU states.

Recommendations

The above conclusions point to a number of key recommendations.

1. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta, working with the European Union and its agencies, as well as the UNHCR and NGOs* should treat refugees and migrants with dignity, respecting their human rights and affirming legal commitments under international and European Union law as well as good practices in refugee protection.
2. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta* should respect the spirit of the Reception Conditions Directive, Charter of Fundamental Rights, in addition to the Refugee Convention and UNHCR's guidelines on refugee protection to ensure that those in the reception system enjoy the full range of protection services, WASH, psychosocial assistance and information regarding the asylum and relocation processes.
3. *The government of Greece* should discontinue the practice of housing migrants and refugees in dangerous, inhumane and inappropriate reception centres, such as Elliniko, where protection services are absent or sub-standard. Such centres should be closed.
4. *The governments of Greece and Italy* should reiterate their commitment to take responsibility for managing the reception process, as guided by the UNHCR, European Union and other agencies, recognising that previous uncoordinated efforts have complicated the effective management of the reception system and have had a knock-on effect on the relocation process.
5. *The European Commission* should instruct EASO to develop new guidelines to improve the quality of reception and to standardise provision across the European Union, in consultation with the UNHCR, in order to improve the reception experience and provide a gateway to more effective integration, above all in the areas of education and training.
6. *The European Union* and its partners must continue to work with the UNHCR to build capacity for the Greek government to manage arrivals, protect those in the reception process and ensure that asylum applications are properly reviewed and decided upon in a timely fashion.
7. *The government of Greece* should accelerate plans to support successful refugee integration. Such integration depends on the combination of support of state, local and municipal agencies working with NGOs and civic actors.
8. *The government of Italy* should take steps to correct the informal integration of migrants to prevent further protection challenges down the line. In order to mitigate against the threat of migrants falling into exploitative situations, we recommend that the state should work to regularise their status, even if only temporarily.
9. *The governments of Greece, Italy and Malta* should prosecute those who profit from the illegal exploitation of refugees and migrants in order to disincentive further corrupt and abusive practices.
10. *NGOs and service providers* working within the reception system should receive updated training, both technical and non-technical from UNHCR's partners and other experts in refugee protection to facilitate their interaction with asylum-seekers and to advance appropriate integration efforts.
11. *The governments of Greece and Italy and the European Union institutions* should coordinate more closely, providing specific information on the profiles of those selected for relocation to facilitate the integration of migrants in participating host countries.
12. *The UNHCR, European Union and their partners* should provide data disaggregated by gender, including data on the gender of children and minors, so that service providers may better plan the delivery of support and integration services.

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