

The Role of Local Government in the Implementation of Immigration Policy

GEORGAKOPOULOU STAVROULA

M.Sc. in Urban and Regional Development,
Department Economic and Regional Development
Panteion University of Athens.
Email: roulageo2009@hotmail.com

DELITHEOU VASILIKI

Permanent Assistant Professor, Department Economic and Regional Development
Panteion University of Athens.
Email: v.delitheou@panteion.gr

Abstract

The paper's purpose is to discuss immigration in Europe and especially in Greece. It presents the institutional and legal framework created to manage immigration issues and it evaluates the implementation of these. Greek Legal System is characterized by multiplicity and complexity There are too many Legal Documents and often they are controversial to each other. Indexing of those documents helps to create a complete picture of the discussed issues. In Greece, the body implementing immigration policy is the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, which created the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and awarded the Local Government Organizations the key role in implementing this strategy. The possibilities and the financial and institutional means available to Local Government Organizations to meet this role are also the subjects of study and observations. The paper finds structural inadequacy of the Greek administration to effectively design and execute extensive immigration policy programs. Based on this finding, proposals for administrative reorganization are presented.

Keywords: Government, Role, Policy, Immigration.

Introduction

Immigration is one of the oldest phenomena in the history of peoples and many cultural elements, as well as entire cultures, are due to this phenomenon. Migration is the geographic movement of people from one place to another for a permanent or temporary settlement, made either voluntarily or forcefully, to change the way of life and seek for better luck. The concept comes from the verb "migrate" and is a form of population mobility within the surrounding space. (Fidaki, M., 2012).

The term "refugee" is not the same as "migrant". The refugee is the person who is outside of his or her national country and who has a legitimate fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or, political beliefs. Because of this fear, the person does not want to enjoy the protection of this country. An Immigrant is a person who, voluntarily abandons the country of which he is a national. The immigrant may be legal or illegal. A legal immigrant, having the nationality of a third country, enters the territory of a state following the legal procedures and formalities, with the necessary legalization documents. The illegal immigrant enters the territory of a state without legitimate documents and remains without having satisfied the conditions of staying. (Sismanidou M., 2017).

Migration can be distinguished in several categories, depending on the discrimination criteria used each time. According to the criterion, the state as a geographical area of study the distinction is between internal or external, where migration is within the boundaries of the state itself or outside of them. Based on the intention of immigration, it is distinct from voluntary or involuntary that means that discrimination is whether immigration is a free decision or a result of political, religious, and other persecutions. Based on the planned length of stay, it is temporary or permanent. Temporary migration is the movement of people to a place for living or working reasons and their staying is from one month to one year, while permanent migration involves movement of people to a place with staying time of more than one year. Based on the destination, it can be distinguished on a continental or overseas basis, depending on whether the immigrants should cross the sea to reach the destination country or the destination country belongs to another continent. In terms of changing or not changing the way the immigrant lives, it is distinguished in innovative, when the way of living is changed and conservative when the immigrants' way of living is unchanged. Depending on the degree of dependence on nature, it is distinguished in archaic, because of the exhaustion of natural resources and modern, caused by economic causes. Based on the size of the migrating population, it is distinguished in an independent when migration is the result of a decision by individuals or small groups and in mass when it is a form of a mass movement, such as population exchange, trips, etc. (Karamanis, B., 2012), (Paradisanou A., 2018).

Societies are trying to regulate the mobility of migrant populations in several ways, such as controlled entry, strict limitation, social integration policies according to their socio-economic and administrative organization, and social standards, which are promoted in every society (Litsa et al, 2015).

According to Schnapper, immigration policy is defined as the set of measures and social practices that concern two necessary and complementary axes, which are: (a) to regulate and control entry, residence and employment of non-citizens of a specific society, including measures to encourage the return or temporary residence and to combat illegal immigration (it refers to pure immigration policy); and (b) to confront with the already established migrant populations on national territory. The second pillar refers to pure social policy, which is observed in national integration policies for immigrants, concerning education policy, housing policy, social security, health and welfare policies, and employment policies that apply to legitimate populations who do not have the nationality of the country in which they are established (Theodosios P., 2012).

Local government plays an important role in shaping and implementing migration policy. Local government is the exercise of public authority within a given area by local bodies elected by the local electorate. According to the Kallikratis Program (Law 3852/2010), Local Self-Government is organized into two levels, which are first-degree Local Authorities (Local Government Organizations (L.G.O.s) (Municipalities) and second degree (L.G.O.s). (Regions). L.G.O.s of the first and second degrees are responsible for the administration of local affairs and they have administrative and financial independence. Their authorities are elected by universal and secret ballot. The state supervises L.G.Os but its supervision is only for legality checks (Georgakopoulou S., 2018), (Delitheou V., 2017).

Immigration in European Union

Immigration affects globally all the countries on the planet, which are at the same time sending countries, host countries, and crossing countries. According to the World Labor Organization, the total number of international migrants increased from 175 million in 2000 to 232 million in 2013 and 258 million in 2017, of which 234 million were in working age (more than 15 years old) (207 million in 2013) and 164 million were immigrant workers (150 million in 2013). Working-age migrants accounted for 4.2% of the world's population aged 15 and over in 2017, while migrant workers accounted for 4.7% of the world labor force (Sarris N., Barouxi Ch., 2012).

EU was and continues to be a major attraction for refugees - immigrant appeals due to its economic prosperity and political stability. In 2014, immigrants - refugees, who had entered the European territory from the sea and land, amounted 280,000, while in 2015 more than 1 million migrants arrived via the sea and only 34,900 by land. In 2015, more than 3,770 immigrants died in the Mediterranean. Most were drowned on their journey from North Africa to Italy, while the other 800 were drowned in the Aegean in their attempt to cross Turkey from Greece (Brozou M., 2018).

4.3 million people migrated in the EU in 2016, while 3 million outgoing migrants from EU Member States were registered. Of the 4.3 million immigrants, 2 million were third-country nationals, 1,3 million were citizens of another EU Member State, 929 000 people migrated to a Member State of the EU of which they were nationals (eg repatriated nationals or nationals, were born abroad) and 16,000 were (Eurostat, 2019).

In 2016, Germany recorded the largest number of incoming migrants (1,029,900), followed by the United Kingdom (589,000), Spain (414,000), France (378,100), and Italy (300,800). In the same year, the countries that recorded the largest number of outgoing immigrants were Germany (533,800), the United Kingdom (340,400), Spain (327,300), France (309,800), Poland (236,400) and Romania (207,600). The 21 Member States of the EU recorded more incoming immigrants than outgoing, which did not happen in Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, and Romania (Eurostat, 2019).

As it can be seen from the above data, the inflow of immigrants into the old continent has increased in recent years due to many international events and facts such as the war in Syria, the international financial crisis, the war in Ukraine, the revolt in North Africa and the rise of ISIS. All European countries have been converted into immigrant host countries (Bouboulis X., 2015).

Over the last years, EU Member States have received migratory pressures from many and new sources to which they had to respond by maintaining a balance between economic and humanitarian considerations and under European legislation and important international agreements. Free movement within the EU, as well as increasing pressures on migratory waves, have led the EU to the awareness of the need for community action (Kolonioti I., 2012).

The European institutional framework on migration affects the corresponding national, through the issuing and mandatory incorporation of directives, but also the formulation of non-binding recommendations. EU aims at the existence of a long-term and complete European immigration policy based on solidarity. The new immigration policy of the EU is based on four axes: the integration of migrants, the definition of the conditions for legal immigration, the fight against irregular immigration, and the conclusion of readmission agreements with the sending countries. (Peppas L., 2015), (Schmid-Drüner, 2018).

From time to time various agreements, regulations, and protocols have been created within the EU. but also, bilaterally for the management of migratory flows (Kolonioti I., 2012). The following table lists the European Treaties, the European Councils, and the Regulations for immigration.

In March 2014, the Commission adopted a Communication entitled "An open and safe Europe: from theory to action". This communication included the vision for an Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice. According to Article 68 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Council defined the strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning for the area of freedom, security, and justice for the period 2014-2020. The guidelines focus on the objective of transportation, implementation, and consolidating of the existed legal instruments and measures. Finally, it stresses the need to apply a global approach for migration, making the best use of legal immigration, providing protection to those who need it, fighting irregular immigration, and effectively protecting borders (Dimitriou M., 2016).

Table 1: Institutional developments in making immigration policy

Treaties, Councils, and Regulations	Year	Decisions
Schengen Treaty	1985	It was decided the free crossing through the internal borders by all nationals of the member states and the free movement of goods and services.
Amsterdam Treaty	1997	It aimed at preserving and developing of Union as an area of freedom, security, and justice, in which the free movement of people is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures regarding external border controls, asylum, immigration, and prevention and repression of the crime.
European Council of Tampere	1999	It was decided to expand EU cooperation between the countries of origin of migrants, the creation of a common asylum system, and the correct treatment of migrants entering the EU.
Eurodac Regulation	2000	A fingerprint comparison system was created for asylum seekers and some other categories of irregular migrants.
European Council of Laaken	2001	It was discussed the strengthening of cooperation on migration issues as well as the progress of implementation of the objectives set at the Tampere Council.
European Council of Seville	2002	Emphasis was placed on return programs for irregular migrants to their countries, the conclusion of their readmission agreements, and the better and more effective guarding of EU borders.
Dublin II Regulation	2003	It defined that the first country of entry of a foreigner will be responsible for examining the asylum application.
European Council of Thessaloniki	2003	A proposal was made for the establishment of a special operational force to guard the external borders of the EU. (Frontex).
European Council of Hague	2004	The EU's priorities for action were formulated to ensure security, justice, and free movement of citizens in the EU.
European Council of Brussels	2005	It was decided that all countries involved in the phenomenon of migration (origin, crossing, and destination) should cooperate to best address the phenomenon.
European Council of Brussels	2007	It was decided for the period 2007-2013 to set up the European Fund for the Integration of Immigrants from third countries.
European Council of Brussels	2008	The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, which is an attempt to commit all EU Member States, was approved creating a common immigration policy at an early stage.
European Council of Lisbon	2009	It was clarified that EU shares its competences in the immigration sector with the Member States, particularly regarding the number of migrants allowed to enter a Member State legally for job search.
European Council of Brussels	2009	Stockholm Program (2010-2014) was approved which contains proposals and decisions to deal properly with issues related to justice, security, and free movement in the area of free movement of Schengen persons.

Source: Libanos, N. (2017), self elaboration.

In October 2014, immigration was declared one of the EU's top political priorities. On 13 May 2015, the European Commission presented a European Migration Action Program, which proposes measures to address the refugee crisis and better management of migration from every point of view. The Commission proposes four orientations: 1) to reduce incentives for irregular immigration, 2) to manage borders, to save

lives and to secure external borders, 3) to develop a stronger common asylum policy, and 4) to implement a new policy on legal immigration by modernizing and revising the blue card regime, defining new priorities for integration policies and optimizing the benefits of immigration policy for people and countries of origin (Zambas E. 2018), (Schmid-Drüner, 2018).

On October 15, 2015, an EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan was concluded consisted of two main parts, which was activated on November 29 2015 at the EU-Turkey Summit and was the precursor of the Joint Declaration of 2016. In the first part, the aim was to support more than 2.2 million Syrians under temporary protection, as well as their Turkish hospitality communities, mainly through financial support. The second part sought to strengthen cooperation between the two sides to tackle irregular immigration through the visa liberalization dialogue and the provisions of the readmission agreement between the EU and Turkey (Alexopoulos B., 2018). Concerning the effectiveness of the Joint Declaration on the objective of halting migratory flows, according to the latest available data, the total number of irregular arrivals has decreased by 97% since the implementation of the Declaration, while the number of lives lost at sea was decreased considerably. (Efsthathiou, G., 2017).

For 2014-2020, there are several EU programs funded by governments, local authorities and non-governmental organizations for various migration-related activities such as immigrant integration, crime prevention at the local level, training, cooperation and coordination of state and non-state actors, the promotion of human rights and the strengthening of social cohesion (Papakonstantinou M. 2014). The EU's main financial instruments to support legal and irregular immigration, return, asylum, border management, and integration are the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (27 national programs), and the Internal Security Fund (31 national programs) (European Commission, n.d.).

Funding for the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund for the 2014-2020 implementation period amounted to € 6.89 billion. The budget of the Internal Security Fund, Border and Visa, amounted to € 2.80 billion over the same period. The financial resources of the Internal Security -Police Fund were € 1.09 billion (European Commission, 2018a). In the period 2016-2017, supports the Syrian refugees in Turkey, with € 3 billion, of which € 1 billion from the EU budget and € 2 billion from its member states (European Commission, 2018b).

The involvement of Local Government in the management of the migration phenomenon is promoted from the EU Institutions. All European countries acknowledge self-government authorities as a crucial factor in creating and implementing immigration policies. Many countries delegate specific responsibilities to self-government authorities within the framework of administrative procedures concerning the granting of residence permits (eg Greece, Belgium, Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands) (Antoniadis K., 2010).

Regarding immigrants integration policy, EU encourages the Member States to ensure a complete approach based on the coordination of housing policies with fair access to employment, health care, and social services as well as cross-sectoral cooperation including enhanced communication between local, regional and national levels (European Commission, 2016).

European local authorities are called upon to play an important role in meeting the challenges posed by immigration, given that they deal with local issues that concern the populations. Local authorities are also responsible for enhancing social cohesion, the sense of belonging in a community, and the interconnection with the home country of immigrants (Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, n.d.).

One of the priorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe for the period 2017-2020 is to strengthen the role of local authorities in immigration issues, such as integration, participation, and non-discrimination of immigrants. Congress, through networking and information exchange between local authorities, is committed to supporting local-level initiatives for the reception and

integration of refugees. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions sets out three priorities for the immigration-refugee issue, which are: access to the city and regional funding, access to housing, and productive multilevel governance. To carry out their tasks, local authorities must be facilitated by the European institutions and the Member States so that they have access to targeted funding for the cities and regions hosting immigrants-refugees. Taking measures locally is one of the key elements for the successful integration of migrants. Surely, there can be no successful integration if integration policies are not in line with the national and regional strategy, the involvement of Civil Society Organizations, and especially if awareness of the local population is not built (Sismanidou, M., (2017).

Immigration in Greece

In recent years, Greece has become a sending and a host country for immigrants. The immigration of the Greeks is due to the economic crisis, unemployment, and fear for a life without a future. According to the Bank of Greece data, between 2008 and 2016, 427,000 Greeks, aged 15-46, left the country. Most Greeks, who are now leaving the country, are young scientists with professional experience. Greek immigrants are mainly targeted at Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates (Available: <https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/275836/i-krisi-edioxe-sto-exoteriko-miso-ekat-ellines-neoys-epistimones,26/06/2019>).

The financial crisis, which erupted in Greece in recent years, did not act as a deterrent for incoming immigrants. Greece is the main gateway for immigrants to Europe due to the difficulty of guarding the country's land and sea borders. (Haraakopi E., 2013). The crossing of migrants is very easy through the Greek islands and Evros borders. According to the Coordinating Body for the Management of the Refugee Crisis, in 2016, refugees in Greece amounted to 57,286. In July 2016, 2,995 refugees were accommodated in Mytilene, 2,494 in Chios, and 1,157 in Samos. Summarily 6,546 people in the northern Aegean islands have applied for asylum. In Attica, 10,370 refugees were accommodated, 1,687 in central Greece, and 250 in southern Greece. Finally, 23,535 refugees remained in Northern Greece (available: <https://www.newsbomb.gr/ellada/story/710928/posoi-einai-kai-poy-diamenoy-n-ol-prosfyges-kai-metanastes-simera-stin-ellada,26/06/2019>). In 2017, 29,130 people from Turkey entered the Greek islands and 32,115 (an increase of about 10%) in 2018 (Bozaninou, T., 2019).

The increasing flow of refugees and immigrants to the Greek borders has forced the country to call for reinforcement and practical assistance from Frontex, which organized a rapid-fire operation in the Aegean with 15 ships and 293 border guards. The operation was attended by members of the Coast Guard and the Greek Police. In Lesbos, which received the largest number of immigrants, 272 border guards were placed in Chios 94, Kos 45, Leros 30, and Samos 73. In Kastelorizo a floating boat was placed. The Greek side participated with 22 vehicles. This operation used 520 border guards, experts, and interpreters, who would register, check incoming people, locate fake documents, and especially patrol the areas (Sultani O., 2018).

Migrants-refugees, illegally entering Greece from land or sea, are being promoted in detention and reception centers for immigrants. In Greece, there are 14 centers for detention and reception of immigrants, which are the following: Detention Center at Sception Center at Vathy (Samos), Center for First Adult Reception at Amygdaleza, Detention Center at Elliniko (the new detention centers), Detention Center at Petrou Rallisstr, (Athens), Detention Center at Aspropyrgos, Detention Center at Vena (Rodopi), Detention Center at Filakio (Evros), Detention Center at Igoumenitsa Thesprotia, Detention Centre at Psarogianni Camp in Stano (Aitolokarnania), First Reception Center in Orestiada and Detention Center at the former camp of Filidis in Karoti (Evros). Living conditions in these places are not the best (Psarakis A., Hatzidaki B., 2014).

Since the beginning of the migration crisis, the European Commission has allocated over EUR 2 billion to Greece for managing migration, of which almost EUR 1.5 billion was exceptional financial support. On the 20th of December 2018, the European Commission decided to finance Greece with EUR 289 million, with

EUR 195 million being used for accommodation and EUR 61 million for reception conditions, EUR 33 million for research and rescuing of immigrants, and the remaining € 357,000 will be allocated to protect immigrants from winter (European Commission, 2018c).

In Greece, the legislative framework for immigration was not properly formulated until the 1990s. The creation of the legislative framework was parallel to the implementation of European provisions within the framework of the common European policy, following the accession of Greece to the European Economic Community. In the period before 1990, the Greek immigration legislation was incomplete and was limited to two laws: Law 3275/1925 (Regarding the establishment and movement of aliens in Greece) and Law 4310/1929 (Regarding the establishment and movement of foreigners in Greece, police passport control and deportations). The two laws prohibited the entry of foreigners in Greece unless they had all the legal documents and a work permit. During the period 1991-2017, Greece's legal framework was strengthened, as shown in the following table (Gikaraki K., 2016).

Table 2: The Legal Framework of Greece for the period 1991 - 2016

Law	Title	Goals
1975/1991	Entry-exit, stay, work, the expulsion of foreigners, process of recognition of foreign refugees and other provisions	It was aimed at limiting immigration. The main issues regulated were border controls, entry, stay, work and exit of foreigners, deportation procedures as well as the criteria for examining asylum applications.
2910/2001	Entry and residence of foreigners in the Greek Territory, Acquisition of Greek Citizenship by naturalization and other provisions	It aimed at the regulation of issues to facilitate the integration of immigrants, such as the issuing of a residence and work card, vocational training and learning of the Greek language, entry into the labor market, social and political integration. It foresaw the establishment of an Immigration Policy Institute for the design, support, and implementation of immigration policy.
3013/2002	Upgrade of protection Policy and other provisions	It did not change the previous law at all but extended all residence permits that had expired on 30/12/2002.
3202/2004	Election expenses during prefectural and municipal elections, Economic administration and management of local authorities, issues of foreigners and other provisions	It increased the validity of the residence permit to two years.
3386/2005	Entry, stay and social integration of third-country nationals in the Greek territory	It regulated the issues of entry, residence, and social integration of third-country nationals, with a view to the proper organization of foreigners' residence permits for work, study, and family reunification purposes. A new strategy was established for immigrants residing in the country (Integrated Action Program).
3536//2010	Special regulations of immigration policy issues and other matters of competence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Decentralization	It introduced new arrangements aimed at better implementation of the previous law and facilitating the mobility of foreign workers geographically as well as among the employment sectors. It foresaw the establishment of a National Committee for the Social Integration of Immigrants.
3838/2010	New provisions for Greek Citizenship, of expatriate and legally residing immigrants and other provisions	It provided for the possibility of acquiring Greek citizenship for children of immigrants who have been living with their parents legally and permanently in the country for at least 5 years, as well as children of immigrants who have attended at least six classes in a Greek school.
3852/2010	New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration – KallikratisProgramme	It designated as the competent authority for the granting of staying the Directorate General of the Region of Decentralized Administration and set the establishment and functioning of the Immigrant Integration Council.
3907/2011	Establishment of the Asylum Service and	It foresaw the establishment of an Asylum Service, which

	the First Reception Service to adapt the Greek legislation to the provisions of Directive 2008/115 / EC on common rules and procedures in the Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals and other provisions	will deal with the examination of asylum and international protection claims. Its main competencies include support for policy design, regarding granting of asylum, informing applicants for international protection on the application process, supplying applicants for international protection with legal and travel documents, processing of applications for family reunification of refugees, etc. It was provided for the set up a First Reception Service, which is responsible for the effective management of third-country nationals illegally entering the country under conditions of respect of their dignity by subjecting them to first reception procedures.
4018/2011	Reorganization of the licensing system for the residence of foreigners in the country under conditions of increased security, Arrangements of Issues of Local Authorities and other provisions of the Ministry of the Interior	Decentralized Administrations set up "one-stop services" for third-country nationals. The competence for the residence permits is transferred from the municipalities of the country to the Foreigners and Immigration Services of the Decentralized Administrations, which are responsible for receiving the applications for the granting or renewal of residence permits, the delivery of the licenses to the holders and the notification of the rejected persons, the provision of information about the progress of the application and the collection of the deposit bill.
4521/204	Immigration and Social Cohesion Code and other provisions	It aimed to collect the provisions of immigration law, align with EU legislation, and rationalize the existing institutional framework and address the malfunctions identified in the implementation of the existing legislation.
4332/2015	Modification of provisions of the Greek Citizenship Code	A set of common rules governing the procedure for examining applications for a single permit was adopted to make the overall procedure for issuing a single residence permit effective and transparent to ensure an appropriate level of legal certainty for the persons concerned
4368/2016	Measures for the acceleration of government work and other provisions	It established the right of free access to all public health structures for the provision of nursing and healthcare to uninsured and vulnerable social groups, including migrants and applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.
4375/2016	Organization and operation of the Asylum, Appeal, Reception and Identification Service establishment of the General Secretariat of Reception, adaptation of the Greek Legislation to the provisions of Directive 2013/32 / EU of the European Parliament and the Council "on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection status" (recast)	The Social Integration Directorate, which aims at studying, designing, and implementing the policy of integrating beneficiaries of international protection and immigrants into Greek territory, was re-established.

Source: Karrasavoglou, A., (2014); Gikaraki, K. (2016);
Available: <http://www.opengov.gr/immigration/?p=790> [28/06/2019], self elaboration.

Presidential Decree 123/2016 establishes the Ministry of Migration Policy, which is called upon to play an important and co-ordinating role, especially in the coordination of the Decentralized Administrations and the Local Authorities. to the specialization, formulation, and implementation of the relevant actions, to the information of the local authorities and the awareness of the employees of the public authorities and the bodies of the Local Authorities on issues of integration and intercultural awareness (available: [HTTP://www.opengov.gr/immigration/?p=783](http://www.opengov.gr/immigration/?p=783), 07/07/2019).

The latest addition to the legal framework on Greece's immigration policy is Circular no. 13. According to this circular, from the 3rd of April 2017, the competence to issue residence permits granted for exceptional reasons is transferred from the Migration Policy Directorate of the Ministry of Immigration Policy to Foreigners and Immigration Services of Decentralized Administrations. The Decentralized Administrations of Greece undertake the competence to examine and issue the residence permits of all third-country nationals residing illegally in the country regardless third-country nationals hold one or more residence permits in the last decade or have never held a residence permit. This change aims at splitting requests at different reception points to scrutinize files more quickly, as well as facilitating third-country nationals who no longer have to go to Athens to apply for settlement (Tsekoura S., 2018).

Local Government, as a mechanism for concluding administrative work in the framework of the granting of residence and work permits, and as a mechanism for the social integration of immigrants, is called upon to play an important and decisive role in meeting the challenges posed by migration (Tsioukas G., 2006). Municipal authorities, independently or in cooperation with other public and non-governmental organizations, provide a large number of social services such as health services, education, social care, etc. Also, local authorities have a better knowledge of the local community and the prevailing conditions, because immigrants and beneficiaries of international protection experience their everyday life, work, support their families, raise their children and, in general, are active and engage in relationships, and bonds with others mainly at the local level (Ministry of Immigration Policy, 2018).

The lasting pathologies of the Greek public administration cause problems in the administrative system of reception and integration of immigrants. This problematic situation is due to the structural inadequacy of the Greek administration to design and implement extensive social policy programs, the Greek administration's inability to respond to new requirements of social regulation, the lack of choice of goals and objectives, planning and programming of immigration policy in conjunction with the absence of an assessment of the previous implementation of immigration regulation programs in the problematic immigrant legislative framework that has made more difficult the work of the administration, as well as the lack of trust between the administration and the immigrants. Other factors hampering the reception and integration of immigrants include the inadequate provision of necessary resources to the administration, the inadequate computerized system of residence permits, the limited number of specialized staff, the lack of coordination between the competent services, and the unsatisfactory building and logistic infrastructure, which makes the operation of services more difficult (Simopoulos C., 2005).

In order for Greece to be able to welcome and integrate immigrants into the local community, EU, the State, the regional and local authorities should give solution to the problems and weaknesses the Greek public administration is facing. Initially, the Municipalities are invited to reorganize and upgrade their services. This can be achieved by organizing a special conference, which will aim at informing and educating employees on immigration issues. All municipalities in Greece will have to install the new electronic system for managing applications for the granting and renewal of foreigners' residence permits, which will make easier the work of the competent service and the life of immigrants. Also, local authorities should be provided with appropriate logistics equipment (eg computers, printers, etc.) for the proper functioning of the new electronic system. Also, municipalities should work together, but also with regional authorities and the government, so that they can solve immigration issues (eg conducting surveys, recording data on the number and characteristics of the exchange of experience in the field of integration, etc.) (Nikolaou S., 2014). The State should enable municipalities to hire new staff with project lease contracts. That is, each municipality will hire qualified staff to deal with the refugee crisis. Their contract will end when all immigrants join the local community. The EU and the State should provide the necessary guidance and funding to the self-government bodies to achieve their active participation in the implementation and formulation of targeted reception and integration policies (Ministry of Immigration Policy, 2018). European, national, regional, and local authorities should step up their efforts to improve citizens' communication and awareness of the changing situation to ensure the necessary support and response to tackle the crisis at all levels (Institute of Local Government, 2016).

If Local Government succeeds in smooth and proper integration of immigrants into the place where they live and work, then this will bring positive results for the immigrants themselves and the local community. Immigrants and beneficiaries of international protection will contribute to the economic development of local communities through their access to the local labor market and entrepreneurship initiatives. Also, immigrants will contribute to the local community the social and cultural wealth they bring from their country of origin. Finally, the integration of immigrants will reduce certain problems, such as crime, the black economy, etc., which are being created by the exclusion of immigrants from social and economic goods (available: <http://www.antigone.gr/files/en/library/educational-material/080627.pdf>, 30/06/2019).

Instead of Epilogue

Migration is a multi-level and multidimensional phenomenon that affects all the countries of the world, that are sending, host, and migrant countries at the same time. The number of people living globally outside the borders of their country of origin seeking a better lifestyle is growing steadily.

In recent years, the inflows of immigrants into EU countries have increased due to the war in Syria, the international financial crisis, the war in Ukraine, the uprisings in North Africa, and the rise of ISIS. The increasing pressures of migratory waves have led the EU to the establishment of an integrated European immigration policy aimed at establishing a balanced approach to legal and irregular immigration. All EU countries recognize the self-governmental authorities as an important factor in creating and implementing national immigration policies that are shaped under the European institutional framework. Some European countries, such as Belgium, Italy, Greece, and others, assign to local authorities certain responsibilities regarding the issue of residence permits.

Greece has become a sending and a host country for immigrants in recent years. Every year, thousands of Greeks leave the country because of the economic crisis. However, the economic crisis has not been a barrier to incoming immigrants-refugees, as Greece is considered the main gateway for immigrants to enter Europe. The increasing immigration flows at the Greek borders have led the country to ask for financial support and practical help from the EU.

The legal framework for immigration was not properly formulated until the 1990s. Since 1991, a series of laws and individual provisions have been in place, relating to the reception of immigrants, their social inclusion, and the residence and work permits. According to the Greek legislative framework, Local Government is called upon to play an important and decisive role in meeting the challenges posed by immigration, since this is the first point of contact with immigrants.

To enable Greece to welcome and integrate immigrants into the local community, problems and weaknesses should be solved (eg reorganization of services, strengthening of cooperation between European, national, regional and local authorities, education and sensitization of employees, etc.). To these problems, the EU, the State, the Regions, and the Municipalities of Greece are giving solutions. However, local authorities will play a very important role in addressing them through various projects and actions aimed at smoothly integrating immigrants into the local community. This can be achieved by making good use of European funding.

References

- Alexopoulos, B., Implementation of the EU - Turkey Joint Declaration: evaluation and results in the management of refugee and migratory flows, University of Peloponnese, Athens. (2018).
- Antoniadis, K.-E., Social inclusion of migrants.Principles that should govern the integration policies of immigrants.Problems emerging in local society, social cohesion, and education from the application of these principles.Proposals for solving at the local level the differentials between principles and reality, National School of Public Administration and Local Government, Athens. (2010).

- Bouboulis, X., (2015). The Role of Immigration in Disrupting or Maintaining International Security, University of Piraeus, Athens.
- Bozaninou, T. Three years since the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement. Available: <https://www.tovima.gr/2019/03/20/world/tria-xronia-apo-ti-symfonia-ee-tourkias-gia-to-prosfygiko/>[June 27, 2019].
- Brozou, M.-X.. European Policies for the management of high migration flows, under the Modernization of the European Social Model, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki. (2018).
- Delitheou, V. Notes: Organization and finances of local government. Panteion University, Athens. (2017).
- Dimitriou, M. Migration phenomenon in Greece and Europe, Piraeus Technological Educational Institute, Piraeus. (2016).
- Efstathiou, G., (2017). The Dublin Regulation: Implementation Issues, evaluation and Prospects, National Public Administration and Local Government, Athens.
- European Commission, (2016). Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, Strasbourg, COM (2016) 377.
- European Commission, (2018a). Midterm evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and the Internal Security Fund, Brussels COM (2018) 464.
- European Commission, (2018b). EU-Turkey declaration. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/greece/sites/greece/files/docs/20180314_eu-turkey_2_years_on.pdf[25 June 2019].
- European Commission, (2018c). Immigration and borders The European Commission grants € 305 million more to the Member States under pressure. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/greece/news/20181221/metanasteusi_kai_sinora_el[29 June 2019].
- European Commission, (n.d.). Funding in the areas of migration and border management. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/funding_country_sheet_el_en.pdf[25 June 2019].
- Eurostat, Statistics on migration and the migrant population. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics[20 June 2019].
- Fidaki, M. Immigration and refugee: Two forms of uprooting (causes, consequences, and integration problems), Project 2012-2013.
- Georgakopoulou, S. Integrated Spatial Investments as a Development Opportunity for Local Government: The case of the Municipality of Piraeus, Panteion University, Athens. (2018).
- Gikaraki, K. Comparative Analysis of the Migration Policy of Greece-Sweden in the Period 1990-2010, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki. (2016).
- Harakopi, E., (2013). Illegal immigration and local communities, Technological Educational Institute of Kavala, Kavala.
- Institute of Local Government. Project Plan for the Management of the Immigration Problem by the Municipalities of the country, Athens. (2016).
- Karamanis, B., (2012). Immigrant reception centers in the Prefecture of Ioannina, Technological Educational Institute of Kalamata, Kalamata. (2012)
- Karasavoglou, A., (2014). The phenomenon of the illegal entry of immigrants in Greece: Economic and socio-political dimensions, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini.
- Kolonioti, I. EU and Immigration. Opportunities and Prospects, Technological Educational Institute of Epirus, Preveza. (2012).
- Libanos, N., (2017). EU Migration Policy and Control Mechanisms factors and results that shaped the EU-Turkey negotiating environment, on the management of migratory and refugee flows, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens.
- Litsa, A.-G., Bakopoulou, M. and Bobola, M. Migration Policy and Problems of Moving Populations in Greece, Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece, Patras. (2015).
- Ministry of immigration policy. National Strategy for Integration. Available: <http://www.opengov.gr/immigration/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2019/01/ethniki-stratigiki.pdf> [June 29, 2019].

- Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Cyprus. Cyprus and migration: Principles of integration and the role of local government. Available: <http://www.municipalitiesnet.eu/flipbook/files/assets/common/downloads/publication.pdf>[June 26, 2019].
- Nikolaou, S., Local Government and Immigration: The case of the Municipality of Ermoupolis, Technological Educational Institute of Peloponnese, Kalamata. (2014).
- Papakonstantinou, M.E. Unaccompanied minors. Policies for managing migrant flows of unaccompanied minors in the context of the EU Common Immigration Policy: The Case of Greece, University of Piraeus, Athens. (2014).
- Paradisanou, A., The phenomenon of immigration. Available: http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=1852[December 27, 2018].
- Peppas, L., Laws on the "immigration issue" in the Greek Parliament: Legislative Work and
- Psarakis, A. and Hatzidaki, B., Economic migration in Greece and Europe: A Look At Then and Now, Piraeus Technological Educational Institute, Piraeus. (2014).
- Sarris, N and Barouxi, Ch.. Integration of Immigrants: Perceptions, Policies and Practices, National Center for Social Research, Athens. (2012).
- Schmid-Drüner, M., Migration policy. Available: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/el/sheet/152/%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7>[21 June 2019].
- Simopoulos, C., The relationship between immigrants and the administration: problems and suggestions for improvement of the process, GSEE-ADEDY Labor Institute, Athens. (2005).
- Sismanidou, M. The immigration policy of OTA: The case of the City of Athens, National School of Public Administration and Local Government, Athens. (2017).
- Soultani, O. The historical context of migratory and refugee flows in Europe and Greece, Jean Monnet European Center of Excellence, Athens. (2018).
- Theodosios, P. Assimilation vs recognition, University of Piraeus, Athens. (2012).
- Tsekoura, S., Migration Policy in Greece: An Initial Assessment, Harokopio University, Athens. (2018).
- Tsioukas, G., (2006). Reorganization and upgrading of municipal services for foreigners, Research Program: Local Government and Immigration.
- Zambas, E. Multiculturalism and Immigration in the EU: Cultural and Social Barriers that Immigrants face in Their Everyday Life in Greece, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki. (2018).