RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges to the integration of Syrian refugees

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Abstract: In this study, we provide an overview of the situation of Syrian refugees and other non-citizens living in host countries. We explored the cases of several countries: Turkey, which is one of the main destinations for refugees, flees the Syrian crisis; Germany and the United Kingdom, which are high-income countries where the public sentiment about refugees has changed over time; Greece and Italy, nations that share a close border with countries experiencing large refugee influxes; and Canada and Australia, which have had different approaches regarding inflows of refugees and do not share borders with countries that have significant outflows of migrants and refugees. Our review of policies suggests that the successful resettlement of Syrian refugees is dependent on political commitment that is coupled with public support and community engagement. Successful social and economic policies to address the refugee crisis demand a combined effort in terms of planning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing initiatives. Most importantly, record-keeping and sharing data with stakeholders need to be improved, which is a joint request of non-profit organizations and academic institutions.

Keywords: refugees; asylum; migration; Syria; civil war; integration

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1. Introduction

Since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 13.1 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. As of April 2018, 6.6 million people have been internally displaced, and an estimated 5.6 million Syrians have fled the country (UNHCR, 2018a). The number of refugees and asylum seekers is estimated to be almost 3.6 million in Turkey, one million in Lebanon, 700,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, 130,000 in Egypt, and 35,000 in other North African countries (Operational Data Portal, 2018). Out of this total group of Syrian refugees, close to one million have requested asylum in different countries within the European Union (EU) (European University Institute, 2016).

To date, the response to the refugee crisis has focused largely on providing humanitarian assistance for refugees (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], 2013; Oxford Committee for Famine Relief [OXFAM], 2016a). Even so, international organizations including OXFAM and Doctors without Borders (MSF) have argued that the international aid response has failed to keep up with the rising needs of Syrian refugees (MSF, 2013; OXFAM, 2016a). Since the crisis started, countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan have struggled to offer adequate social protection services, which has led to an increase in vulnerable groups (UNHCR, 2018b). In addition, the arrival of refugees in Lebanon and Jordan has impacted the economy and public service provisions. This population inflow has resulted in thousands of Syrians being stranded at the Jordanian and Turkish borders, unable to enter the host country and reach safety (UNHCR, 2018b). Moreover, the crisis continues to have social, health, and economic effects on the displaced populations as well as on

the host countries, whose national services are facing severe strains. Some host communities have reported decreases in wages and worsening working conditions due to increased competition for low-skilled and unskilled jobs. This process contributes to negative perceptions of refugees and migrants in host countries. Reports have shown that native populations fear migrants mainly because they are concerned with losing their jobs to migrants, as well as due to prospects of decreasing wages for local habitants and the increasing burden on public services (Klugman, 2009).

Given that the Syrian conflict has already lasted for more than seven years and with no short-term solution in sight, we conduct an analysis to address the evolving long-term issues of refugees in their host countries. The severity of the refugee situation is defined not only by displacement duration but also by daily life conditions and the socioeconomic integration of refugees in the host country (UNHCR, 2004). Thus, host countries should establish long-term strategies to help integrate refugees into their economies and societies. Fostering opportunities for refugees to build their livelihoods in host countries are an important component of creating long-term resilience. However, this process is expected to be a complex one. Refugees are usually not allowed to work in the formal economic sector in their host countries, even though participation in economic activities is essential to improve and sustain the well-being of individuals and families.

In this study, our objectives were to provide an overview of the situation of Syrian refugees and other non-citizens living in host countries, as well as to summarize a series of policies and legislation regarding refugees. We explored the cases of seven host countries: (1) Turkey, which is the main destination of refugees from the Syrian crisis; (2) Germany and the United Kingdom, which are high-income countries where the public sentiment about refugees has changed overtime; (3) Greece and Italy, which are countries that share a close border with nations that have large outflows of refugees; and (4) Canada and Australia, which do not share borders with countries that have significant refugee outflows but have been dealing with inflows of migrants and refugees in different manners. To this end, we analyzed national data from the selected host countries to explore attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward refugees, as well as to describe labor market integration. Our study also focused on economic activities that individuals reported, including performing paid work, engaging in educational activities, and unemployment. We also provided a review of policies and legislation toward refugees in the selected host countries.

2. Data Sources

This study was sponsored by the Pardee Global Human Progress Initiative within the nonpartisan RAND Corporation and was conducted between late 2016 and early 2017. We reviewed the existing literature in the selected host countries: Turkey, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Canada, and Australia. We also analyzed statistics on migration flows, attitudes toward refugees, and immigrant integration. The analysis of data on refugees was a challenging endeavor since information on flows, public services available, and integration of refugees is not systematically collected by the International Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations. As a strategy to address these difficulties, we explored cross-sectional data and reports from several sources, as listed in Table 1.

We also investigated individual level data from the most recent European Social Survey (ESS) for each of our selected European countries: Germany (2014), Greece (2010), Italy (2012), and the United Kingdom (2014). This analysis focused on main economic activities, which report whether individuals were: (1) Performing paid work, even if away temporarily (employee, self-employed, and working for family business); (2) engaged in educational activities, even if on vacation (not paid for by employer); (3) unemployed and actively looking for a job; (4) unemployed, wanting a job, but not actively looking for a job; (5) permanently sick or disabled; (6) retired; (7) in community or military service; or (8) doing housework, looking after children or other persons.

For our review of policies and legislation geared toward refugees, we collected information from several sources, including governmental websites, non-governmental organizations, and the U.S. Library of Congress.

3. Results

3.1. Asylum seekers

Since 2012, Germany has been the primary destination country for asylum seekers in Europe. As a result, we chose Germany as one of the seven countries to focus the analysis [Figure 1]. Between 2012 and 2015, Germany received one of the highest numbers of asylum applications in the region (more than 860,000) (UNHCR, 2015), and the number of applications that were approved was approximately 244,000 during the same period (Eurostat, 2017a). Positive decisions granted to Syrian refugees in Germany were influenced by the country's policy toward accepting Syrian refugees by waiving the EU rules. During this same period, the number of Syrian asylum applicants in Germany increased from

Table 1. Data and links from several sources used for the analysis of refugee integration.

Source	Data	Link
Eurostat	Asylum quarterly report, 2017	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report
	Asylum Statistics, 2017	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics
	Asylum and managed migration, 2017	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/asylum-and-managed-migration/data/database
ESS	Latest survey for countries: Germany, 2014; Greece, 2010; Italy, 2012; United Kingdom, 2014	http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org
CIDOB and MPG	MIPEX, 2014	http://www.mipex.eu/
UNHCR	Population statistics, 2000–2015	http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview
	Resettlement data, 2003–2016	http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-data.html
	Situation in Syria, May 24, 2018	https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria
	Syria Emergency, April 19, 2018	http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html
UNOCHA	Syrian Arab Republic, 2018	http://www.unocha.org/syria
Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute	Syrian refugee project, 2016	http://syrianrefugees.eu/
Pew Research Center	Global Attitudes Surveys, Spring 2016	http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2016/07/Pew-Research-Center-EU-Refugees-and-National-Identity-Report-FINAL-July-11-2016.pdf
Reach - informing more effective humanitarian action	Reports on Syrian conflict	http://www.reach-initiative.org
Turkish Statistical Institute	Main website	http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/
	NESD	https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn = 130&locale = en
AIDA	Access to the labor market in Turkey	http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/access-labour-market-0
ORSAM	Main website	http://orsam.org.tr/orsam/anasayfa
TEPAV	Main website	http://www.tepav.org.tr/en

Note: ESS: European Social Surveys, UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees, TEPAV: The Economic Policy Research Foundation Of Turkey, CIODB: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, MPG: Migration Policy Group, MIPEX: Migration Integration Policy Index, NESD: National Education Statistics Database, AIDA: Asylum Information Database. ORSAM: Turkish Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

approximately 8,000 to over 160,000 (Eurostat, 2017b), and the number of Syrian asylum applications with positive decisions increased from 7,400 to over 100,000 (Eurostat, 2017c).

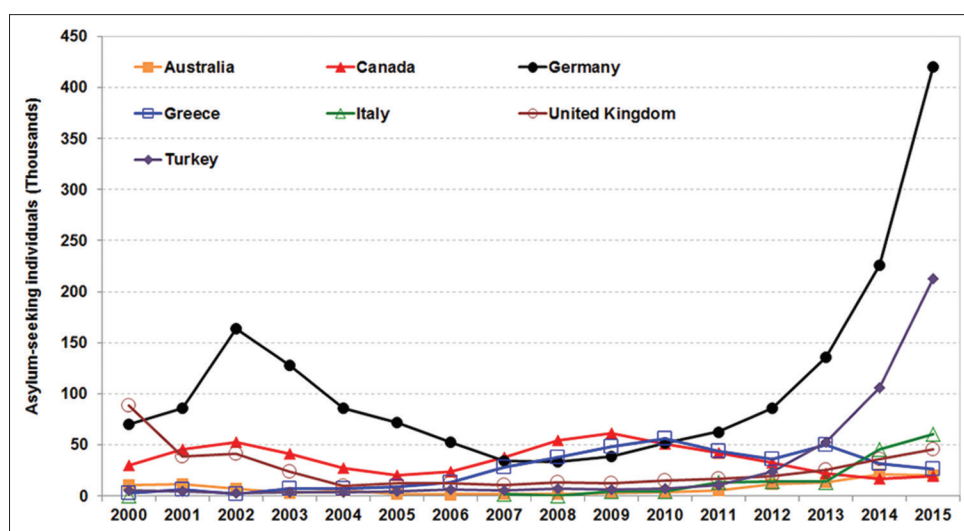## 3.2. Resettlement of refugees

Resettlement can be an important option for refugees since they can be transferred from an asylum country to another country where they might settle permanently (UNHCR, 2018c). The number of Syrian refugees sent to resettle in other countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, and Germany) is smaller than the number of refugees living in Middle Eastern regions (e.g., Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt) as well as those who fled but did not get a formal refugee status (Ostrand, 2015). In 2015, the EU Council approved the European Resettlement Scheme, under which more than 22,000 refugees were offered legal and safe pathways to enter the EU. As of May 2017, over 16,000 refugees had been resettled under the European Resettlement Scheme and the EU-Turkey statement (EU, 2017).

The United Nations has called Canada's refugee effort, a model for the rest of the world (Ditchburn, 2016). Canadians have raised over 110 million dollars to help refugees through private sponsorship. The Government of Canada worked with private citizens (some of whom served as sponsors), as well as international organizations in Lebanon and Jordan to select, screen, and resettle refugees to

cities across Canada. The government has also established various programs for refugee resettlement including orientation sessions, health care, employment counseling, and language training. Newly arrived refugees received government-assisted funding for 12 months, including health care and other services. Public support for the initiative has also increased as the program has progressed. The results of these Canadian initiatives can be seen by the sharp increase in overall resettlement of refugees since 2014 [Figure 2].

Figure 3 illustrates the resettlement of Syrian refugees by country of resettlement between 2013 and 2016. Australia resettled 1,747 Syrian refugees, Canada 17,498, Germany 6,085, Italy 382, and the United Kingdom 4,138 (UNHCR, 2017a).

In 2017, the Australian government pledged to resettle 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iran, in addition to the existing humanitarian program intake of 13,750 refugees from these countries (Australian-Government, 2017). Australia prioritized the settlement of displaced Syrians and Iraqis temporarily located in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. UNHCR data suggest that 1,169 Syrian refugees were resettled in Australia in 2016, a considerable increase from 167 in 2015 [Figure 3]. Refugees from various countries usually reach Australia by boat from Indonesia through a dangerous journey that has caused the deaths of hundreds of people (BBC, 2017). The ruling political parties have been implementing tough

**Figure 1.** Asylum-seeking individuals by host countries, 2000–2015.
Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Population Statistics, 2000–2015 (http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview)
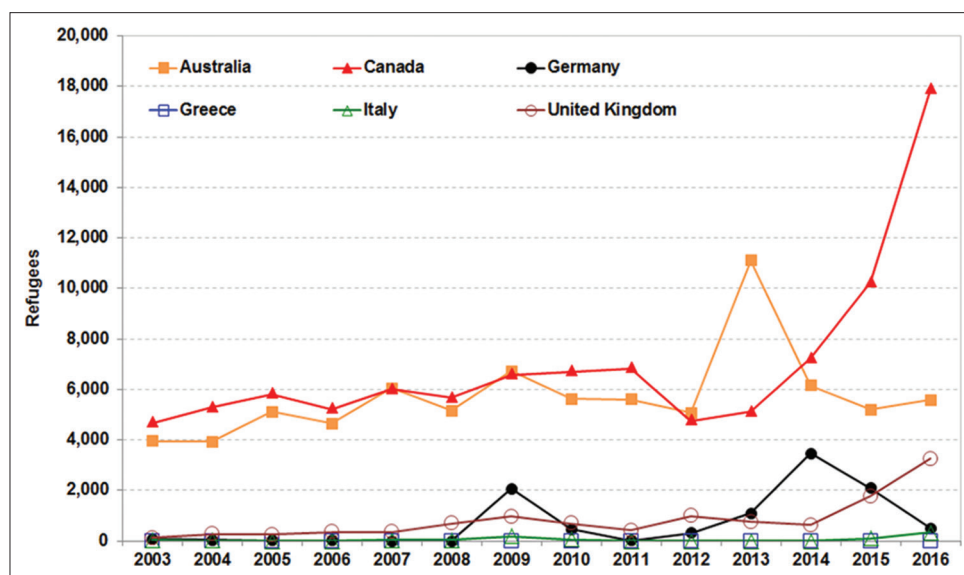
Figure 2. Refugees sent for resettlement by country of resettlement, 2003–2016.
Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Resettlement Data, 2003–2016 (http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-data.html)
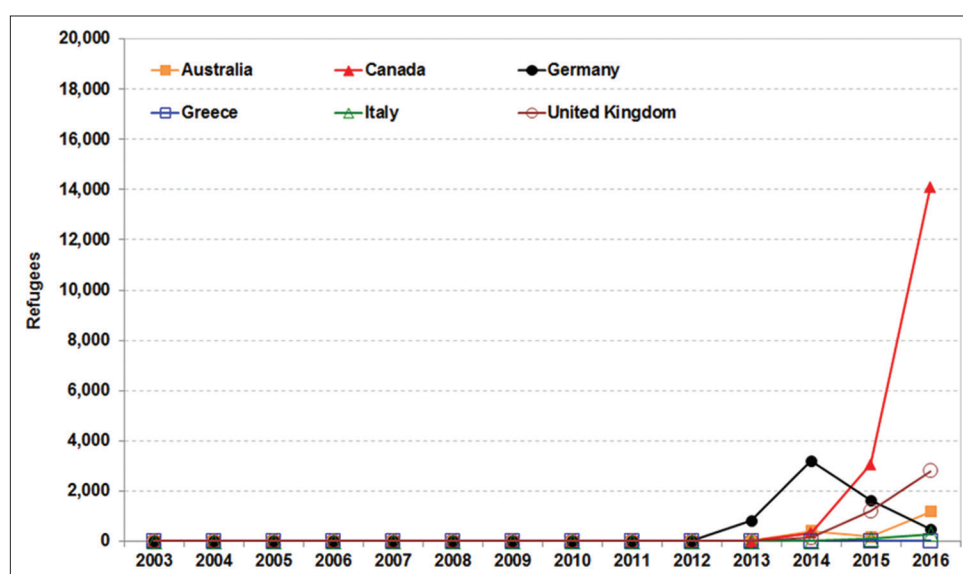
Figure 3. Syrian refugees sent for resettlement by country of resettlement, 2003–2016.
Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Resettlement Data, 2003–2016 (http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-data.html)

policies to curb these flows with military vessels. When refugees reach Australia, they are usually placed in offshore detention camps (Loewenstein, 2016) with poor living conditions in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (Pearson, 2016).

Canada had a considerable increase in the number of resettled Syrian refugees in 2016 [Figure 3]. The Canadian initiative is primarily due to a commitment by the Liberal Party's Fundraising and Community Engagement (Seidle, 2016). By May 2016, 56.5% of Syrians were resettled as government-assisted refugees, 34.9% were privately sponsored, and 8.6% received federal and private funding. Refugees received 12 months of income support, as well as health care and other services.

Germany has been a major actor in addressing humanitarian aid for Syria and neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2016). The nation has been pushing for synchronized actions to address the Syrian refugee crisis by EU countries. In 2015, the German Government reformed asylum policies to accelerate the asylum process, including the establishment of norms for cash benefits for refugees and the reduction of the financial burden on states and municipalities (Gesley, 2015). However, in 2016, the government sets stricter asylum rules to suspend family reunification in specific cases, reduce cash benefits, and facilitate deportation (Gesley, 2016a). These actions seem to have increased the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Germany between 2012 and 2014 and decreased it between 2014 and 2016 [Figure 3].

Greece has also experienced the impact of the refugee crisis due to its geographical location. In the 1980s, immigration started to increase in Greece as Asians, Africans, and Poles looked for work in construction, agriculture, and domestic services. The political changes of the Central and Eastern European Governments in the second half of the 1980s also increased immigration flows to Greece. A major factor that transformed Greece into a receiving country is its geographical location, which positions the country as the eastern entrance to the EU with extensive coastlines and easy border access. Although Greece has had constant inflows of Syrian refugees, it has not been resettling them (UNHCR, 2017a). Most of these refugees live under difficult conditions on Greek islands (Karakoulaki and Tosidis, 2017).

In Italy, the number of refugees and migrants arriving in the country has been constantly updated by UNHCR: 153,842 people arrived in 2015, including 70,354 people in the first 6 months of 2015 (UNHCR, 2017b). These figures remained almost the same when compared to the 70,222 arrivals between January and June 2016. The vast majority of arrivals to Italy was from Nigeria (17.3%), Eritrea (12.6%), Gambia (8.1%), and Côte d'Ivoire (7.5%). The portion of Syrian (0.3%), Iraqi (0.2%), and Afghan (0.2%) arrivals remained low in 2016.

The United Kingdom offered to resettle 20,000 refugees by 2020 (OXFAM, 2016b). Scotland alone offered to resettle at least 2000 Syrian refugees (Gower and Cromarty, 2016). In December 2017, the Scottish Government celebrated the resettlement of 2000 Syrian refugees, 3 years in advance of their original plan (Nelson and Saltmarsh, 2017). This proposal included children and orphaned children, per the UNHCR recommendations. Full costs of resettlement are expected to be covered from the international aid budget, to ease pressure on local authorities. The organization, Save the Children, insisted that the British government should resettle 3,000 unaccompanied children who were in Europe in 2016 (Dearden, 2016; Gower and Cromarty, 2016; Wintour, 2016).
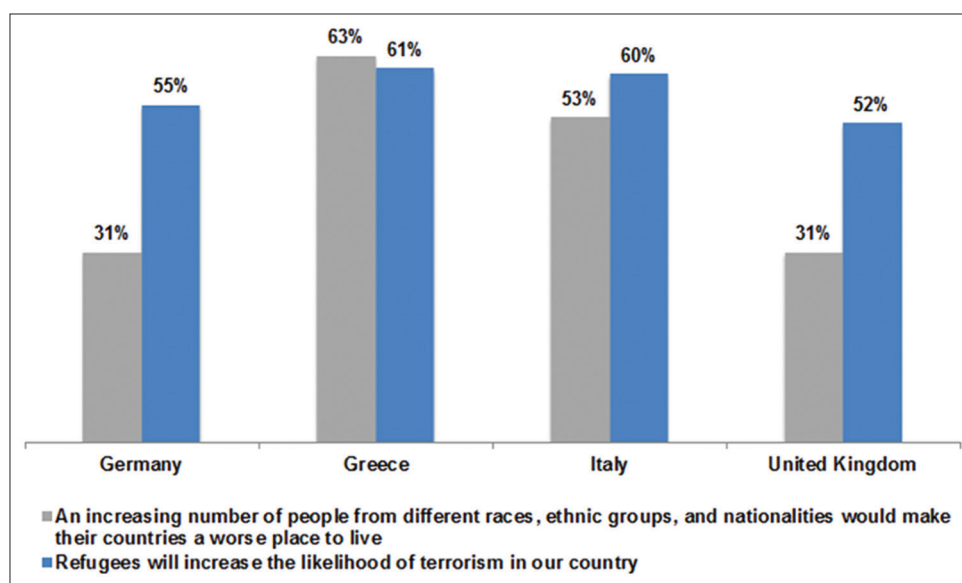
Figure 4. Percentage of Europeans who agreed with specific statements, 2016
Source: Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Survey, Spring, 2016

3.3. Perceptions toward immigrants

According to the Global Attitudes Survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, multiple countries in the EU seem to believe that the presence of refugees could increase terrorism and take jobs and social benefits away from residents. For instance, in Greece and Italy, most respondents said that their countries would be worse places to live if there was an increasing number of people from different races, ethnic groups, and nationalities [Figure 4]. In Germany and the United Kingdom, this question was also captured by the level of education. Among those with secondary education or below, 39 and 37% agreed with this assessment, respectively. Among those with postsecondary education or above, these numbers were lower (27 and 17%, respectively). Most respondents in Germany, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom agreed with the statement that refugees would increase the likelihood of terrorism in their respective countries [Figure 4].

A considerable percentage of the population in the EU, especially in Greece and Italy, wanted less immigration and had negative sentiments toward immigrants (Poushter, 2015). Greeks and Italians were more likely to say immigrants would generate the negative effects to the society because they take jobs and social benefits away from the native population. Italy has faced major integration issues in regard to refugees and migrants. According to doctors without borders, the reception system of migrants and refugees in Italy is extremely slow and has been highly criticized (MSF, 2016).

People in Germany were more likely to say immigrants make their country stronger because of their hard work and talent (Poushter, 2016). In the United Kingdom, reports suggest that the population broadly welcomed Syrian refugees (Gower and Cromarty, 2016). This sentiment might be linked to the pace and scale of migration that increased by double (nearly four million) between 1991 and 2011, which might have created a better attitude of acceptance toward immigrants in the United Kingdom (MWUK, 2016.

Canada has had a significant experience with welcoming refugees from Southeast Asia, Uganda, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Chile since the 1950s. Canadians have raised approximately 110 million dollars to help refugees through private sponsorship (Ditchburn, 2016). In 1986, Canada was awarded the Nansen medal by the UNHCR in recognition of its major and sustained contribution to the cause of refugees.

Australia ranks as one of the top three resettlement countries in the world (Karlsen, 2016). A study on social cohesion indicated positive public attitudes toward immigration: 68% of Australians agreed that immigrants made the country stronger (Power, 2010). Political leadership had an important role in shaping national opinion regarding immigrants and refugees. A 2015 poll indicated that 57% of Australians believed that the country should increase the number of Syrian refugees (Taylor, 2015). Moreover, 54% thought that the government response to the Syrian crisis was poor. However, public opinion of Australians toward refugees seemed to be divided. For instance, the 2014 Lowy Institute Poll sought to test the idea that all asylum seekers should be processed onshore whether or not they came by boat (a policy that seems to favor a larger number of refugees). This poll indicated that 47% agreed and 51% disagreed that all asylum seekers should be processed in Australia whether or not they came by boat (Oliver, 2014).

3.4. Integration of immigrants

The migration integration policy index (MIPEX) measures policies to integrate migrants in several host countries, which classifies the indicators as favorable (80–100), slightly favorable (60–79), halfway favorable (41–59), slightly unfavorable (21–40), unfavorable (1–20), and critically unfavorable (zero). Canada presented the highest overall score followed by Australia and Germany [Figure 5]. Considering the different policy areas, Canada had favorable values for labor market mobility and anti-discrimination. Germany had favorable values for labor market mobility. The United Kingdom had favorable values for anti-discrimination. Greece had slightly unfavorable values for health status and education of immigrants, while Italy had slightly unfavorable values for education. These results indicate that Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia seem to have more favorable integration policies than countries like Greece.
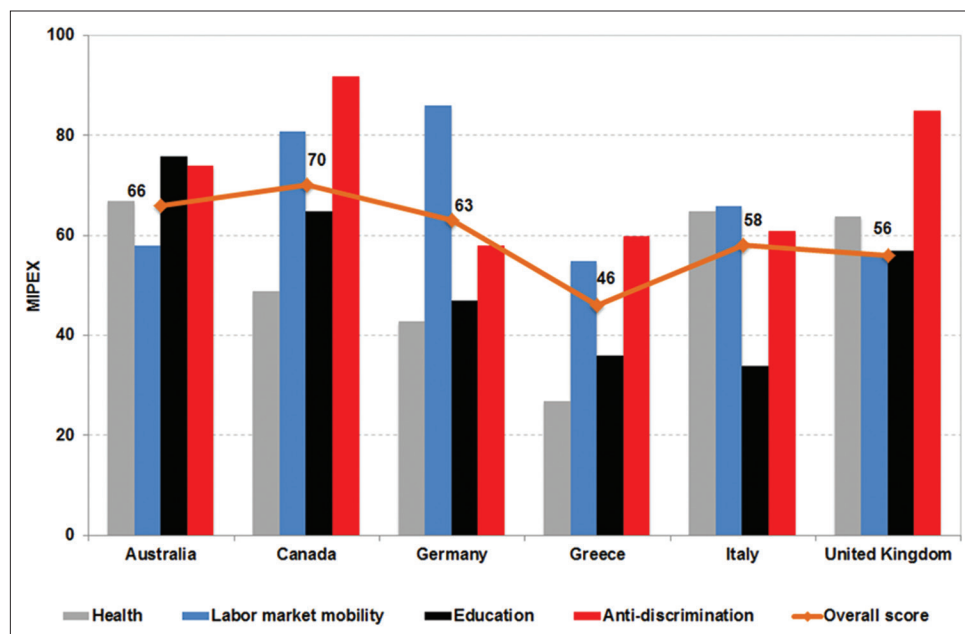
Figure 5. Migration Integration Policy Index across different policy areas, 2014.
Source: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs and Migration Policy Group, Migration Integration Policy Index, 2014 (http://www.mipex.eu/)
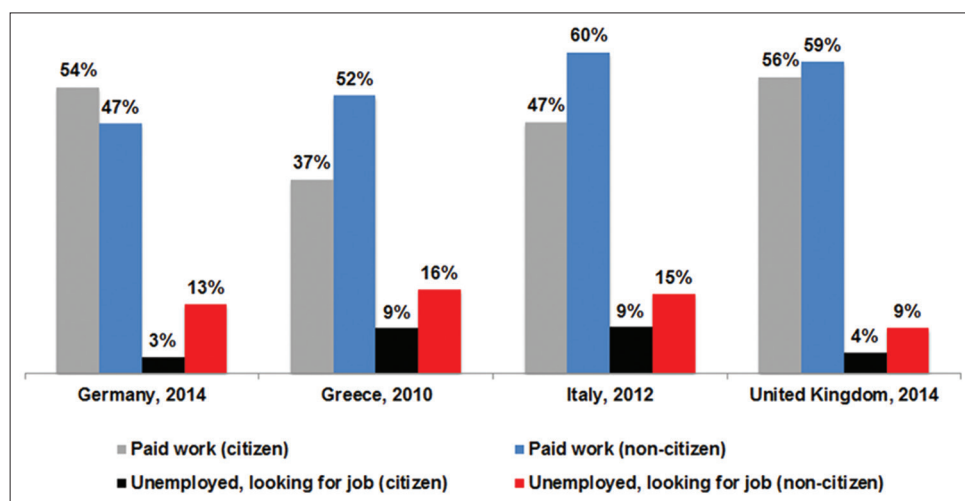
Figure 6. Activity performed during the past 7 days.
Source: European Social Surveys, 2010; 2012; 2014

3.5. Employment among citizens and non-citizens

Challenges to getting a suitable job for first-generation immigrants in the EU included a lack of language skills and inability to transfer qualifications. According to Eurostat, place of origin, religion, and social background were important barriers to getting a job in Greece and Italy in 2014. Perceptions that immigrants might take jobs away from native workers were found to be higher in the United Kingdom than in Germany, based on microdata from the 2014 ESS (listed in Table 1). It is important to note that countries have different requirements in terms of qualifications that are seen as the highest priorities for non-citizens. For instance, Germany puts emphasis on individuals' "willingness to be committed to the way of life in the host country," whereas in the United Kingdom, the highest emphasis was on speaking the official language.

Employment indicators show that residents of European countries who are noncitizens usually performed paid work in higher proportions than citizens [Figure 6]. However, when we looked at those who reported being unemployed and were actively looking for a job, non-citizens had higher levels of unemployment when compared to citizens in Germany, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom. These trends are an indication that non-citizens are more likely to be performing paid activities while still looking for jobs, probably due to current low wages and poor-quality work conditions in the informal economic sector.

In Turkey, Turks and Syrians seem to compete for jobs requiring low skills. Regarding educational attainment, 47.5% of the native Turkish population 15 years of age or older had no secondary-school education in 2017, according to the National Education Statistics Database from the Turkish Statistical Institute. This issue more seriously affected women: 6.4% were illiterate and 7.4% were literate without any diploma in 2017. The educational distribution of the Syrian refugee population is not very different from that of natives in Turkey. Consequently, Turks and Syrians are in direct competition for jobs requiring low or no skills.

Similar to other foreigners, Syrian refugees need individual work permits for employment in Turkey. However, the possibility to apply for these work permits was only granted to Syrian refugees in January 2016, as reported by the Asylum Information Database. By February 2018, only approximately 14,000 work permits had been issued. This is in part due to the requirements imposed on employers. To grant a work permit, the employer had to: (1) Prove that no native Turkish worker was available to conduct the same job of the potential refugee worker; (2) pay 138 U.S. dollars for the refugee work permit; (3) pay at least a minimum wage to the refugee worker; (4) contribute to social security; and (5) submit tax reports (Calabia, 2018). In association with these difficulties experienced by employers, most refugee employment is still in the informal economic sector. Syrian refugees tended to be employed in socially and economically inferior positions due to language barriers, low educational attainment or the inability to show proof of completed schooling, and a willingness to work in poor conditions and for low earnings (Calabia, 2018).

The southeast region of Turkey hosts the majority of Syrian refugees and has been among the least economically developed regions of the country. Border provinces in this area have seen their unemployment levels rise in recent years, especially among low-educated males. This increase in unemployment is associated with a quick rise in job losses by citizens, as Syrian refugees tend to be employed illegally, displacing legal incumbents. Job losses experienced by citizens in areas where Syrians were concentrated not only disrupted the local labor market but also led to negative sentiments toward refugees, resulting in heightened social conflict. Non-camp Syrians tended to live in city slums and face social isolation, which exacerbated the cultural rifts between Syrians and Turks.

3.6. Overview of legislation

We summarized a series of legislative initiatives aimed at refugees that were implemented in Australia, Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom (details and sources are presented in Tables A1-A6 of the Appendix). We present this information below highlighting the historical background of laws and regulations.

In Australia, the 2015 Migration Amendment Act revised the previous 1958 Migration Act and created rules to refuse visa applications for those without a form of identification. This amendment also established strict policies regarding unauthorized maritime arrivals. The government had been intercepting vessels with refugees and placing them in offshore detention camps in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Refugees have been experiencing poor living conditions in these camps.

Our review of policies related to refugees suggests that Canada's successful resettlement of Syrian refugees has been mainly due to political commitment coupled with public support and community engagement, including the private sponsorship of refugees. The involvement of these stakeholders has helped with resettling Syrian families and resulted in their successful integration into Canadian society. Based on lessons learned in Canada, some key factors can be highlighted

for a successful experience with refugees: Policy (legislation and policies have to be in place to allow actions to be taken, while policies must evolve to adapt to changing needs); leadership (it is necessary to have strong leadership within the government and civil society); government structure (formal legislation, as well as coordination and collaboration among different government and civil society groups are important for refugee integration); media (free media outlets play an important role in informing and engaging the public); civil society (government needs to engage ordinary citizens); multistakeholder partnerships (collaboration at local, national, and international levels); implementation on the ground (working with communities to prepare them for integration policies related to refugees); family (keeping families of refugees intact); and intercultural personal contact (direct personal contact between Canadians and refugees) (Alboim, 2016).

Germany has improved active labor market policies and implemented mandatory integration measures, including an increase in funding for language courses and the development of mechanisms to assess previously acquired skills. Germany is one of the several countries to have admitted the largest number of Syrian refugees, more than 25,000, partly due to legislative changes. In October 2015, the German Government introduced several laws related to asylum procedures. The country amended its Asylum Act and Residence Act. The latter provided rules for the admission and handling of refugee claims. Other changes included accelerating the asylum application process, reducing the financial burden on states and municipalities, and improving refugee minors' safety. These laws seem to provide a stimulus for inflows of refugees in Germany. However, the increased number of admitted refugees in Germany could not only be due to changes in laws but also to other countries implementing procedures to reduce inflows of asylum seekers.

A large number of refugees continue to arrive in Greece each year. Over 850,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece in 2015. By sea alone, 173,000 refugees arrived in 2016 and approximately 30,000 in 2017 (EU, 2018). Greece has been implementing legislation to address immigration assistance, while the EU has been providing funding to humanitarian partners in the country. The asylum system continues to face deficiencies, such as a lack of reception centers and poor detention conditions (Papademetriou, 2016). These issues are expected to continue in the near future. The large number of refugees arriving in Greece is one of the factors that led to the implementation of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement, as discussed below.

Italy's system of migrant and refugee reception is considered to be slow and has been criticized by international organizations such as Doctors without Borders (MSF, 2016). Due to Italy's geographical location, the country has seen an increase in the number of immigrants from North Africa, which might partially explain the increase in negative sentiments toward migrants and refugees, as shown by a survey from the Pew Research Center (Poushter, 2015).

In the United Kingdom, the initial policy regarding the Syrian crisis focused on providing humanitarian aid and relief. In early 2014, the National Government announced that it would take a more active role in the Syrian crisis and created a program that helped with the settlement of the most vulnerable refugees from Syria. Public reaction to this effort was positive. The favorable environment for refugees in the country led experts to conclude that immigrants might have higher chances of success when policies are coupled with the support of the native population (MIPEX, 2014). However, after the Brexit vote on June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom is on an imminent path to exiting the EU, scheduled for March 29, 2019. Prime Minister Theresa may highlight that this referendum was an indication that the British population wants a reduction in immigration. The country's net migration was 336,000 in the 12 months before the Brexit vote and 230,000 in the 12 months after the vote (Casciani, 2017). The government aims to reduce net migration to below 100,000 per year (Hunt and Wheeler, 2018).

3.7. EU-Turkey statement

We also explored the socioeconomic and political context as experienced by the Turkish population in recent years. On March 18, 2016, the European Council and Turkey formally agreed to put several principles in practice for governing EU-Turkey relations and tackling the migrant crisis: (1) New irregular migrants would be returned to Turkey; (2) for every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greece, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU; (3) Turkey would prevent new routes of irregular migration; (4) the EU would increase the resettlement of refugees residing in Turkey; (5) the EU would accelerate visa liberalization for Turkish citizens; (6) the EU would provide financial support for Turkey's refugee population, which would include three billion Euros in 2016 and another three billion Euros by 2018; and (7) improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria (EU, 2016a).

The progress report on the EU-Turkey deal highlighted the significant steps toward implementing the deal (EU, 2016b). Eleven migrant lives were lost in the Aegean Sea since the agreement, compared to 270 during the course of 2015. Returns from Greece to Turkey reached 578, including 53 Syrians. Resettlements to Europe reached 1,614 refugees. Financial support included 2.2 billion Euros in allocations and 1.3 billion Euros in signed contracts but only around 0.5 billion Euros in actual disbursements. Turkey allowed the EU to monitor the status of returned migrants, including access

to camps and centers. This task was combined with granting UNHCR access to centers for monitoring international protection activities. The progress report recommended continued cooperation and effort by Turkish authorities despite changes in law enforcement, military forces, and public administration following the failed coup in July 2016.

3.8. Effects of population inflows on host country economies

Policies related to refugees raise the debate on how population inflows might affect the economy in host countries. There are concerns that native workers might experience negative impacts on their earnings and employment, mainly individuals with lower levels of education. These workers might experience increasing competition with immigrants and refugees for low-wage jobs. The question is whether an increase in labor supply, due to the growing inflows of immigrants, has negative effects on labor outcomes of competing low-skilled native workers.

Several studies have shown the impact of immigration on wages and employment in host countries. There are no definitive answers about the impacts of immigration flows on labor markets due to numerous and concurrent effects related to economic outcomes (Blau and Mackie, 2017). One of the most cited studies indicated that immigration reduces the wage and labor supply of competing native workers: Wages of natives decreased by almost 4% when there was a 10% increase in the labor supply of immigrants (Borjas, 2003). Another study highlighted that immigration had a small effect on the wages of native workers with no high school degree between 1990 and 2006 (Ottaviano and Peri, 2012). This analysis also indicated that immigration had a small positive effect on average native wages. However, these flows had a substantial negative effect on wages of previous immigrants in the long run.

Studies used different approaches to compare employment opportunities between immigrants and natives across regions (Card Dustmann and Preston, 2012; Manacorda, Manning, Wadsworth *et al.*, 2012; Ottaviano and Peri, 2012). Results varied due to different countries being investigated, units of analysis, methodological procedures, and types of data (Card, 2012). Three main aspects were related to the diverse results from these studies, as detailed below.

First, studies can consider that economic production, resources, and goods (e.g., financial assets, cash and funds, machinery, production equipment, and facilities) are considered fixed or adjustable through time in a society (Card, 2012). Analyses that assume this production capacity as fixed, while the number of workers increases with immigration, tend to find the negative effects of migration on labor outcomes. If studies assume that economic production adjusts in the long run (maintaining the ratio between production and number of workers), the effects of immigration on average wages of natives are approximately zero.

Second, researchers can consider different education groups in their analysis (Card, 2012). If they consider four distinct education groups in the labor market (dropouts, high school graduates, people with some college, and college graduates), the relatively high fraction of immigrant dropouts distorts the overall share of dropouts in the economy and lowers their wage relative to other groups. A two-group model (high-school equivalents and college equivalents) is in line with labor economics theory and assumes that the share of high-school equivalents is what matters in the labor market. With two education groups, wage has been largely unaffected by immigration.

Third, analytical models can assume that immigrants and native workers with similar levels of education compete with each other equally in the labor market (Card, 2012). In this case, results tend to indicate the negative effects of immigration flows on wages. However, analyses could consider that native workers with low levels of education have advantages in the labor market, compared to low-educated immigrants (e.g., proficiency in host country language and access to broader social networks). When these differences between immigrants and native workers were considered, the results indicated that immigration had positive impacts on labor outcomes of native workers.

4. Final Considerations

Addressing Syrian refugees' socioeconomic integration in host countries demands solutions in two major areas: (1) Recognizing that social and economic integration are interconnected and (2) increasing refugee employment while minimizing labor displacement and unemployment of the native population.

First, cultural and social issues challenge Syrian refugees' successful economic integration. Immigration might have the negative short-term effects on the earnings of the native population. Job market competition could lead to social conflict with detrimental effects. However, these short-term effects can be surpassed by long-term economic development, as a result of an increasing working-age population and a rising demand for products and services. Thus, a social integration program should be accompanied by an economic integration plan in host countries.

Second, the integration of refugees into host labor markets has conflicting objectives. On the one hand, refugees must be included in the formal economic sector to acquire decent earnings and social benefits. On the other hand, the negative

effects on job opportunities for the native population should be minimized. Otherwise, unemployment and negative attitudes toward refugees may increase. Policies must consider these conflicting objectives and effects, as well as tailor actions according to local socioeconomic and demographic conditions.

Successful social and economic policies to address the refugee crisis demand collaborative efforts in terms of planning, implementing, monitoring, and assessing initiatives at different levels. Interagency cooperation in the public sector is essential. Coordination and empowerment of local offices can help with the implementation of context-specific policies. Partnerships between public agencies and private institutions are important to support activities that improve refugee integration and employment creation. These activities include job provision, language training, and release of work permits. While refugees might be unable to vote, governments should consider the concerns that refugees have in regards to their livelihoods.

This study was limited by the lack of survey data from refugees in host countries. Host governments should consider recording and sharing detailed socioeconomic and demographic information about refugees. Improvements in record keeping and data sharing with stakeholders would provide a better evaluation of existing policies and formulation of new interventions.

Future studies could continue to investigate the long-term effects of population inflows. In the past, population inflows have been shown to increase the labor supply and labor market competition, raise demand for services, and stimulate economic development in receiving areas. These analyses could also examine the economic adjustments experienced by labor markets with high levels of immigration.

Authors' Contributions

Ernesto Amaral reviewed and analyzed the literature related to economic integration, reviewed policies and legislation, as well as coordinated and conducted data analysis. Mahlet Woldetsadik reviewed and analyzed the literature related to policies and legislation aimed at refugees in the selected host countries. Gabriela Armenta searched for publicly available databases and conducted data analysis. All authors contributed to writing the final manuscript.

Ethics

This research only analyzed publicly available secondary databases, which do not require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were reported by all authors.

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Appendix. Tables with an overview of legislation toward refugees from selected host countries

Table A1. Overview of legislation toward refugees in Australia.

Australia acceded to the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees becoming the sixth nation to agree with the convention, according to the timeline provided by the Refugee Council of Australia (https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/timeline/)
1958: Australian Parliament passed the Migration Act 1958, which provided guidance to entry, presence, departure, deportation of foreign nationals, as well as procedures for asylum seekers and refugees
Australia acceded to the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees: Expanded the original convention to respond to new refugee situations
1976: First immigration detention center was established
1978: Release of Galbally report: Improved resources and personnel for refugees, but funding remained limited (Langfield, 1996)
1978: Arrival of Southeast Asian refugees led to expansion of federally funded services for new arrivals
1979: Community refugee settlement scheme: A network of volunteer groups was established to provide assistance to humanitarian entrants
1981: Fraser Government introduced the special humanitarian program in response to unrest in Iran
1989: Migration Legislation Amendment Act 1989 was introduced by the Hawke Government to deter and intimidate "illegal entrants," as a response to asylum seekers arriving following the Tiananmen Square massacre and collapse of the Soviet Union (Australia-Government, 2001)
1991: National Integrated Settlement Strategy was established to coordinate and integrate actions across the government related to migrant service needs (Department of Immigration and Multicural Affairs, 2006)
1993: The humanitarian program was separated from the migrant program
1997: Management of immigration detention centers was outsourced to private companies
2002: Australian Government froze asylum seeker applications from approximately 2,000 Afghans
2015: Migration Amendment (protection and other measures) Act 2015 revised the Migration Act 1958, including the creation of rules to refuse visa applications from those who fail to provide identity and the amendment of a framework related to unauthorized maritime arrivals (Australian Government, 2015)

Table A2. Overview of legislation toward refugees in Canada.

Canada has a complicated history before the 1950s, especially with Jewish refugees during the World War II. This report started compiling analyses from the mid-1950s
1951: The federal government issued the "Assisted Passage Loan Scheme" to help immigrants from Europe to pay for their transportation. These immigrants still have to pay the government back after 2 years, which is a rule still used today The Canadian Government resettled over 37,000 Hungarians between 1956 and 1957
1960: The Canadian Bill Of Rights was passed by the parliament, which established that every person has the right to life, liberty, and security
1968: Canada changed its laws to allow deserters from foreign armies to receive landed immigrant status
1969: Canada acceded to the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees
1970: Canada issued a "guideline for determination of eligibility for refugee status" for use by immigration officers selecting refugees overseas
1972: The federal government accepted 7,000 Ugandan Asians
1976: A new immigration act was the first immigration legislation to recognize refugees as a special case of immigrants, which came into force in April 1978
1978: The CCR was formed, which has historical information of the country's responses to refugees (CCR, 2009)
Between 1978 and 1981, refugees made up 25% of all immigrants to Canada. Private sponsorship of refugees program was launched between 1979 and 1981, during the resettlement of 50,000 Southeastern Asian refugees
1987: Canada ratified the convention against torture
1989: Establishment of the guidelines on women refugee claimants fearing gender-related persecution. This action made Canada the first country in the world to implement these guidelines
2002: Immigration and refugee protection act came into force
2004: Safe third country agreement between the U.S. and Canada came into effect Newcomer's pathway to becoming a Canadian citizen is a straightforward process through the government settlements services The country has no anti-immigrant federal political parties (Seidle, 2016)
Canada is recognized as a world leader in protecting refugees, in which immigration and acquisition of citizenship are closely linked

Note: CCR: Canadian Council for Refugees

Table A3. Overview of legislation toward refugees in Germany.

Germany is a signatory to the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees of 1951 and has implemented it into the country's law, according to the timeline of migration history in Germany (DOMiD, 2016)

2005: A new immigration law came into effect, and integration was defined as a legal duty
September 2008: A naturalization test was introduced as a step to receive citizenship. Applicants have to answer at least 17 of 33 questions correctly to receive naturalization

2008–2013: The Asylum Act and Residence Act are two important immigration laws in Germany which provide rules for the admission and handling of refugee claims. Several amendments have been made to these laws due to the current Syrian refugee crisis (Gesley, 2016b)

2014: The government convened the "Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation: Supporting Stability in the Region" and called on European Union member states to significantly expand their contributions (https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/141028-BerlinConferenceDeclaration.pdf)

August 2015: An Act to redefine the right to stay and the termination of residence entered into force. This act grants a residence permit to persons who can prove that they are "well-integrated" after a period of 8 years (4 years for minors)

October 20, 2015: Germany passed the Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures, which aimed to: Accelerate the asylum process; substitute in-kind benefits for cash benefits; reduce the financial burden on states and municipalities; reform integration policies for refugees; and designate Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro as safe countries of origin (Gesley, 2015)

November 2015: An act entered into force to improve the housing, care, and treatment of foreign minors and adolescents, as a strategy to enhance the situation of unaccompanied refugees

February 3, 2016: The German Government implemented the Asylum Package II with several objectives: To accelerate the asylum application process; suspend family reunification for refugees with subsidiary protection status for 2 years; decrease Asylees' monthly cash benefits; facilitate deportation; establish a new Federal Police unit to help procure replacement documents; improve the safety of refugee minors; and designate Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia as safe countries of origin (Gesley, 2016a)

Table A4. Overview of legislation toward refugees in Greece.

First wave of emigration from Greece to other countries was stimulated by the economic crisis of 1893 (Kasimis and Kassimi, 2004)

More than one million Greeks emigrated between 1950 and 1974. Most of them went to western Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia

Immigration to Greece grew at the beginning of the 1980s when a small number of Asians, Africans, and Poles arrived and found work in construction, agriculture, and domestic services

The collapse of the central and eastern European regimes in 1987 transformed immigration to Greece into a massive and uncontrollable phenomenon

In the 1990s, Greece received the highest percentage of immigrants in relation to its labor force

A major factor that transformed Greece into a receiving country is its geographical location with extensive coastlines and easily crossed borders

The formation of a special control guard in 1998 in the northern border improved the situation in that area

2001: Act 2910 established a regularization program that dealt with "the admission and residence of foreigners in Greece and the acquisition of Greek nationality through naturalization." Due to their illegal status, a good number of immigrants escaped census registration, while still others entered the country specifically to take advantage of regularization

2002: Action Plan for the Social Integration of Immigrants for the period 2002–2005: Included measures for the labor market integration and training of immigrants; improved access to the health system; established emergency centers for immigrant support; and delineated measures for the improvement of cultural exchanges among the various ethnic communities (Magliveras, 2011).

2011: The European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the EU indicated that the asylum system in Greece has deficiencies, a lack of reception centers, and poor detention conditions, among other issues (Papademetriou, 2016)

2015: Greece implemented legislation to address immigration assistance, but problems remained, as noticed during the Syrian refugee crisis

Table A5. Overview of legislation toward refugees in Italy.

Italy has a complex system for assistance to asylum seekers and has signed international agreements for the protection of refugees (Figueroa, 2016)

2002: Art. 32 of Law #189 mandated the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Indicated direct participation by local authorities (municipalities) on a voluntary basis; established activation and management of reception projects across the country; and coordinated by the Central Service, a technical body managed by the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI). Interior Ministry carries out monitoring, support, and information activities addressed to the same territorial projects (MSF, 2016).

Main law regulating the field of asylum and migration in Italy is the Consolidation Act on Immigration, partially modified in 2002 (EMN, 2012).

2009: The Security Package established issues relating to migration since 2009; entailed changes to the length of detention and imprisonment of irregular immigrants; funding for return of aliens; a 200 Euro fee for citizenship applications; an 80–200 Euro fee for stay permits (first issue and renewal); and stricter family reunification regulations

2009: The Second Security Act (Law 94/2009) denoted as criminal offense being without proper permit of stay in the country and increased the maximum period that migrants can be detained in Centers for Identification and Expulsion (OSF, 2012)

2010: The Integration Agreement regulates the "point-based permit of stay," which has to be signed by all adult foreigners applying for a residence permit in Italy and is valid for 2 years (EMN, 2012)

February 12, 2011: The DPCM declared "the state of emergency on the national territory due to the exceptional influx of citizens coming from North African countries" and gave civil protection to its management through the ordinance #3933 (MSF, 2016)

December 2011: The EU Blue Card (https://www.apply.eu) is a residence permit for highly qualified foreign workers and is designed to make Europe more attractive for professionals from other countries. All EU member states participate in the system, except the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland

2014: Three-quarters of appeals resulted in the recognition of some form of international or humanitarian protection
September 30, 2015: The Legislative Decree #142 recognizes asylum seekers' rights to protection at least until the first tier of the jurisdictional appeal is completed

2015: Under the SPRAR, the Interior Ministry established an increase in ordinary places for first reception to the amount of 15,550 by the end of 2016, as well as secondary reception to the amount of 32,000 in the 1st month of 2016, and at least 40,000 in 2017 (MSF, 2016)

April 1–30, 2016: The number of arrivals in Italy was approximately 9150 people, according to the European Union (FRA, 2016)

Note: EMN: European migration network, OSF: Open Science Foundations, DPCM: Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, SPRAR: System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, FRA: Agency for Fundamental Rights

Table A6. Overview of legislation toward refugees in the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom implemented several acts related to asylum and immigration, which are detailed by the ICAR, such as the ones detailed below (Ward, 2004)

1993: Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act was incorporated into law, which included the creation of more categories of applicants that could appeal for failed asylum applications, the permission to detain asylum seekers, while their claims were under consideration and the introduction of fingerprinting of asylum seekers

1996: Asylum and Immigration Act introduced a list of countries to be safe and their nations to have little risk of persecution, as well as established that housing and welfare benefits were restricted to applicants at the port of entry

1999: Immigration and asylum act introduced several guidelines to extend possibilities of claiming asylum by undocumented immigrants, established penalties for transporting undocumented immigrants to the country, and introduced the NASS to coordinate support for asylum seekers

2002: Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act implemented changes to asylum law and processes, which included the intention to better track asylum seekers in the national system and integrate refugees into the country

2004: Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act established several provisions, including: People entering the United Kingdom without proper documents are subject to fine or prison for up to 2 years; people who traffic individuals for forced or coerced labor are subjected to fine or prison for up to 14 years; withdrawal of asylum support for unsuccessful asylum seekers who do not leave the United Kingdom voluntarily; connection of asylum seekers with local authorities to access housing; implementation of integration loans for refugees; regulation of the appeal system for refused asylum seekers; and electronic monitoring can be requested for people subject to immigration control

2012: Home office introduced temporary concession allowing Syrians already in the United Kingdom to apply for an extension to their visa or switch into a different visa category without having to leave the country (Gower and Cromarty, 2016)

January 29, 2014: the Syrian VPR Program was implemented. Even though the United Kingdom accepted asylum applications from Syrian refugees, the country focused on providing humanitarian aid to countries neighboring Syria, but not to offer resettlement to refugees (Feikert-Ahalt, 2016)

VPR initially prioritized most vulnerable Syrian refugees (sexual violence survivors, elderly, victims of torture, and disabled people). This program is separate but consistent with UNHCR's Syrian refugee resettlement program (HO/UK, 2017)

There was a call to extend the scheme, but the government approach remained to prioritize spending aid in countries neighboring Syria, rather than offering large-scale resettlement

September 2015: VPR was extended to receive up to 20,000 refugees

Note: VPR: Vulnerable Person Resettlement, ICAR: Information Centre about Asylum And Refugees, NASS: National Asylum Support Service, HO/UK: Home Office/United Kingdom