

Población y territorio

ESPAÑA TRAS LA CRISIS DE 2008

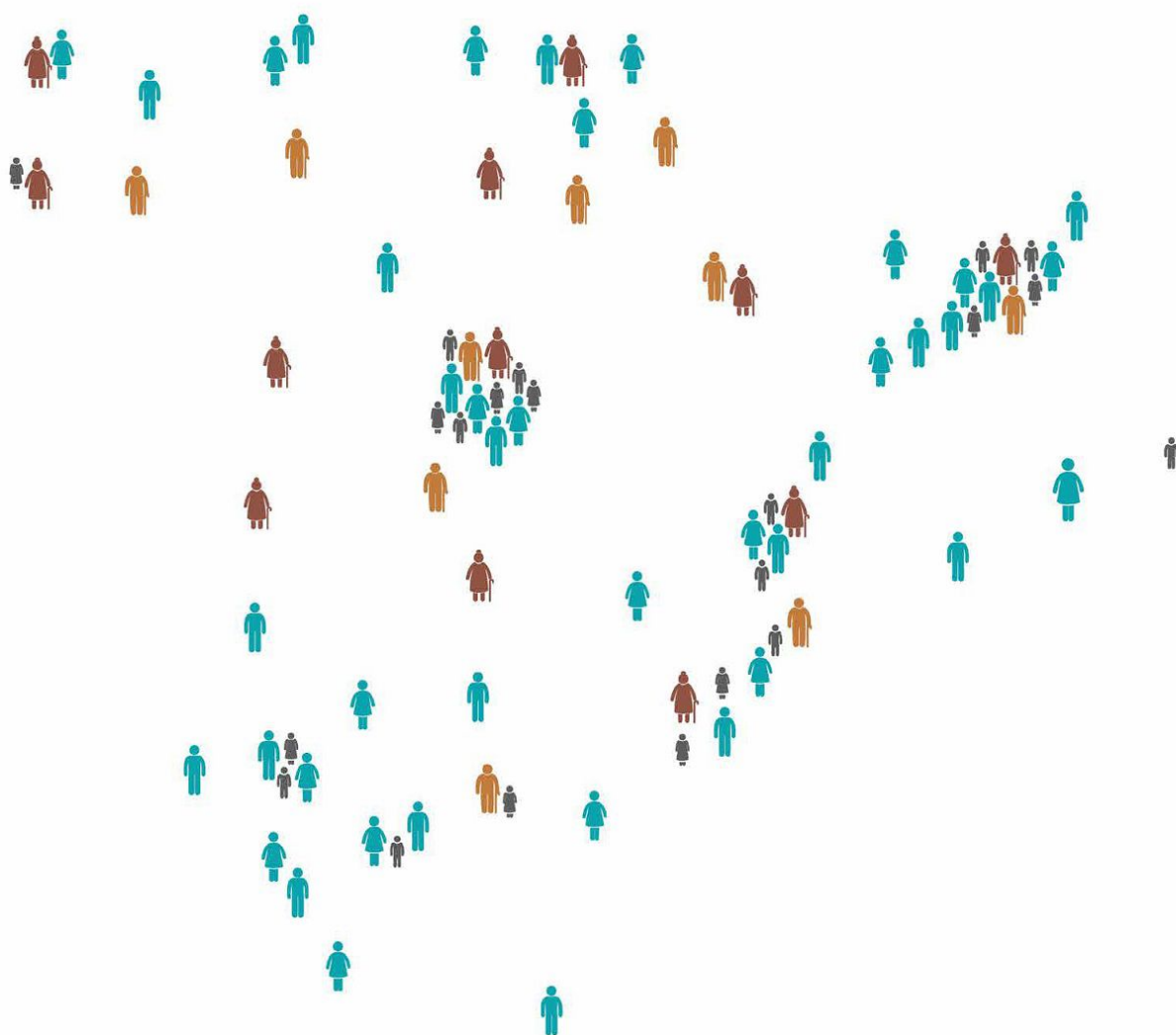
Juan-David Sempere-Souvannavong

Carlos Cortés Samper

Ernesto Cutillas Orgilés

José Ramón Valero Escandell

(EDITORES)



Juan-David Sempere-Souvannavong
Carlos Cortés Samper
Ernesto Cutillas Orgilés
José Ramón Valero Escandell
(editores)

Población y territorio

España tras la crisis de 2008

Granada, 2020

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Diseño de la colección y cubierta:
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Polígono Juncaril

C/ Baza, parcela 208

18220 Albolote (Granada)

Tlf.: 958 465 382

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ISBN: 978-84-9045-911-9 • Depósito legal: Gr. 365/2020

Fotocomposición, impresión y encuadernación: COMARES

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Asylum seekers into southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) over the last decade: a first comparative approach

BYRON KOTZAMANIS
University of Thessaly, Greece

MARIA CARELLA
University of Bari «Aldo Moro»

MARIE-NOELLE DUQUENNE
University of Thessaly, Greece

VASSILIS PAPPAS
University of Patras, Greece

During the last decade, the European Union has been facing one of the largest mass movements of migrant inflows in its history. It is expected that this situation will not change over the next years as a result not only of the development of armed conflicts, but also due to the demographic explosion and the extreme poverty in many African countries. Among the European countries (i.e EU members and EFTA countries), Greece, Italy and Spain, due to their geographical position and the length of their coastline, play a major role as main entry points into Europe.

Emblematic countries of emigration, the three Mediterranean countries, have been converted —at the beginning of the '90s— into immigration countries. For two decades, their inflow and outflow balance is systematically positive, causing a net increase in the number of foreign citizens residing in each one, a fact that is verified by the results of the last two population censuses (2001 and 2011). However, the recent economic crisis has once again reversed the inflow and outflow balance especially for Greece and Spain: around -252 000 and -571 000 respectively for the period 2010-2015¹, while the migration balance remains positive for Italy (but nevertheless characterized by a significantly decreasing trend: +380 000 in 2010 versus 133 000 in 2015). The economic crisis resulting in drastic recession measures has obviously contributed to a new wave of exodus to more robust economies and to a return of foreign workers to their native countries (this the case in Greece with the Albanian workers). In this very specific context, Greece, Italy and, to a lesser extent, Spain, are also facing an unprecedented flow of illegal entries mainly from the Greater Middle east and North Africa. During the last ten years

¹ According to Eurostat database on immigration and emigration, the migration balance again becomes positive in 2016 for these two countries.

(2008-2017), the total number of illegal migrants in EU and the 4 EFTA countries is estimated at about 8 million of which at least 45% has entered via Greece, Italy and Spain. However, it is necessary to underline that Eurostat data concerning illegal entries in Italy are largely underestimated (and even non-relevant)². Therefore, it is more than likely that the relative weight of these three Mediterranean countries exceeds 50%, with Greece alone accounting for more than 20%. Beyond the data accuracy, it is undeniable that Greece, Italy and Spain are on the front line of the refugee crisis (and, more than likely, they will remain there during the next years). Obviously, the majority of illegal migrants come from countries, which are located on the southern borders of the EU. Consequently, this geographical proximity justifies that the sea is the preferred path to Greece, Italy and Spain. Even if the migration routes to EU are not stable³ and depend mainly on border crossing difficulties within the European space (as it was the case with the closure of borders between FYROM and Greece), these three countries remain an important entry gateways.

Moreover, if the initial intention of the migrants coming mainly from the Greater Middle East and Africa is evidently to move to another more developed country of Central and North Europe, it is also conceivable that an increasing number of them will stay permanently. It is thus not surprising that the total number of asylum applicants in Italy, Spain and Greece has significantly increased during the last two years, from 111 000 (2015) to 220 000 (2017). Therefore, the nature of the problem for these countries seems progressively to be changing: the challenge is not only to be able to adequately manage migration flows but also to ensure decent living conditions for those that will be more or less obliged to stay in Greece, Italy and Spain.

² For the period 2008-2016, the number of illegal entries reported by Eurostat is about 320 000, i.e. three times less than that reported by UNHCR.

³ A multitude of routes is followed by people coming from Asia and Africa in their effort to enter EU. Out of these routes, the most 'popular' ones during the last decade were the central and the West Mediterranean ones. The first one is followed by those gathered in Tunisia and Libya trying to enter EU via Malta and Italy, while the second one is followed mainly by persons coming from the Greater Middle East (passing through Turkey), with Greece being the first entry gateway to Europe. During the under consideration period, we specifically observe a movement from the central to the eastern Mediterranean routes with the result that Greece has progressively become the main entrance gateway to EU. In 2015, for example, the east Mediterranean route was taken by the vast majority of those that arrived by sea

1. INFLOWS TO SOUTHERN EUROPE DURING THE LAST DECADE (2008-2017). HANDLING WITH THEM

1.1. Sources and data

The study of recent «migration» flows to the countries of Southern Europe encounters several problems. More specifically, these three countries, which were the main entry gateways for 3,7 million people who tried and managed to enter to Europe were unprepared for the outbreak of these flows. Their handling was confronted with a multitude of problems and posed new challenges to all EU countries. Concurrently, the statistical 'conception' of these flows is characterised by inherent difficulties⁴ and, as a result, the statistical systems have responded with difficulty to the registration of «illegal inflows», a registration in which both national (Ministries of the Interior and/or of Migration Policy, Statistical Institutes) and International Offices (IOM, UNHCR, Frontex, Eurostat) were involved. For the present paper, basic data derived from Eurostat recently available (beginning of June 2018) have been used for our analyses.

1.2. The illegal entries

In the decade 2008-2017 more than 5 millions of people entered illegally in the European Union and the majority of time passing via the south Mediterranean countries. Greece received the largest part of the new entrants, due to its contiguity with most of the countries of origin, on the one hand, and ease of access to it (sea borders, Turkey), on the other. However, the rates «illegal entries/mean population» vary enormously between the three examined countries (163 per 1000 inhabitants in Greece, 13 in Spain, 17 in Italy). The distribution of illegal entries is significantly differentiated between these countries. In Greece, Syrians and Afghans constitute 55% of the entries (but only 10% in Italy and 1% in Spain). On the other hand, those coming from Africa (Maghreb, Libya, «other African countries») constitute a small minority in Greece in contrast with Italy and Spain. At the same time, the specific weight of the entries into Greece and Italy from the former European socialist countries is significant (while it is extremely limited in Spain where large part come from Latin America. The profile of the illegal inflows in the «other EU and EFTA countries» is completely different, as none of the under consideration group of entrants totalize more than 20%.

⁴ The assessment of illegal entries is by definition problematic, as we have to deal with a phenomenon outside of the control of States.

The intensely differentiated profiles of those who have illegally entered in the three Mediterranean countries are determined by a combination of factors: geographical proximity of the country of origin and or of the country from which they came and entered Europe (e.g. Turkey for Greece), ease of access and routes followed (Central / Western/ Eastern Mediterranean routes, Western African one), migratory traditions and existing networks, cultural proximity and language community, pre-existing relations (e.g. Spain with Latin America) constitute a puzzle that illustrates the differentiated by county flows. The above mentioned factors affect obviously less the «other EU and EFTA countries» and, the distribution by country of origin / group of countries of origin of the illegal incomers is more «balanced».

1.3. The asylum applicants

The first time asylum applicants (Tables 1a-b, Annex) in the three southern European countries constitute (by contrast with the other EU and EFTA countries) a small part of the illegal incomers. Spain, Italy and Greece are the main entry gateways to Europe but they are not the preferred ones for a more permanent settlement by the illegal incomers (Tables 1a, 2a, Annex). Thus, less than 20% of the incomers during the decade under consideration submitted a first time application for asylum in the southern European countries. Greece is a «classical» case as only (estimation) 8 out of 100 incomers applied for asylum, and, up to the closing of the «Balkan route» (March 2016), the vast majority of the illegal incomers headed for the most «attractive» central European countries (mainly Germany and Austria). Therefore, the ratios applications for asylum/mean population in each one of the southern European countries, is clearly lower than the ratios illegal incomers/mean population calculated during the same period.

Thus, the profile of the applicants for asylum by country / group of countries of origin in each one of the under consideration countries (Map 1) differs significantly from that of the incomers, in contrast to the «other EU and EFTA countries» in which the differences are very small (1 to 5% per group between the two distributions). More specifically, out of 100 first time applicants (Table 1b, Annex), the part of those coming from the other «African and Asian countries» is clearly higher in Greece than the corresponding one of the incomers, and the same situation concern those coming from the former European socialist countries and Syria in Spain. By contrast, there are no noteworthy differentiations recorded between the two distributions in Italy and the «other EU and EFTA countries». These differences, to a great extent, show the differentiated, by entry country, «attraction» for the illegal incomers by country / group of countries of origin.

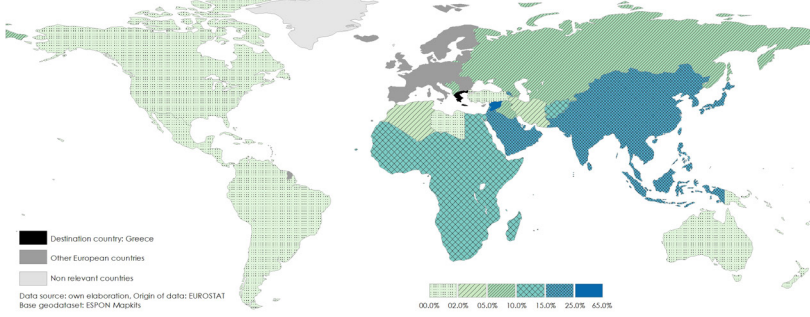
1.4. The final decisions on asylum applications

The final taken decisions on the submitted applications for first time asylum (Tables 2a-b and 3, Annex) constitute a very small part of the total applications in Southern Europe (13%). Yet significant differentiations lie under this mean average: 5% in Italy, 13% in Spain, 31% in Greece, which, in this domain, approaches the «rest of the European countries» (32%). These differences show concretely the differentiated policies and effectiveness of designated authorities in the under consideration countries. The distribution of decisions by country / group of countries of origin of the applicants shows significant differentiations among Greece, Spain and Italy (Table 2b, Annex and Map 2). More specifically, out of 100 decisions in Italy, 72 are applications made by people coming from the «other African and Asian countries», while the corresponding percentages for Spain are 53% and 6% (but in Spain $\frac{1}{4}$ of the decisions concern people coming from Latin America). In Greece, where a substantial part of the decisions consider incomers from the former European socialist countries; the percentage for applicants coming from «other African and Asian countries» is respectively 15% and 49%.

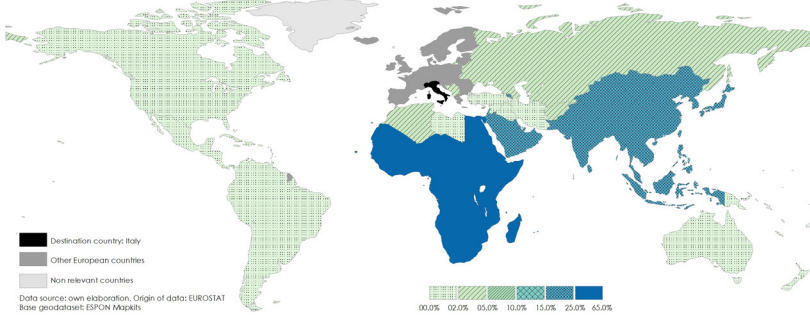
By examining the ratios final decisions / first time applications by country / group of countries of origin of applicants (Table 3, Annex and Map 3), we also find out significant differentiations. These ratios are 68% in Greece for the first time applicants coming from the «other Asian countries», 62% for those coming from the former European socialist countries, and 45% from applicants coming from the «other African countries». In the «other EU and EFTA countries», it is 63% for those coming from Turkey, 58% from the former European socialist countries, 54% from the «other Asian countries» and 44% from Latin America. In Spain, the ratios come to 40% and 26% for the applicants from the «others African countries» and Iran correspondingly. On the contrary, in Italy, a country that reaches decisions with considerable delay, no remarkable differentiations by country / group of countries of origin are observed. From the previous analysis, a first assumption can be made, at least for Greece, Spain and the «other EU and EFTA countries»: the decisions on the applications by persons coming from countries, which do not meet the «requirements» in order to be acceptable, are taken faster.

Map 1. Distribution (%) of first time asylum applicants by country of origin/group of origin's countries, 2008-17.

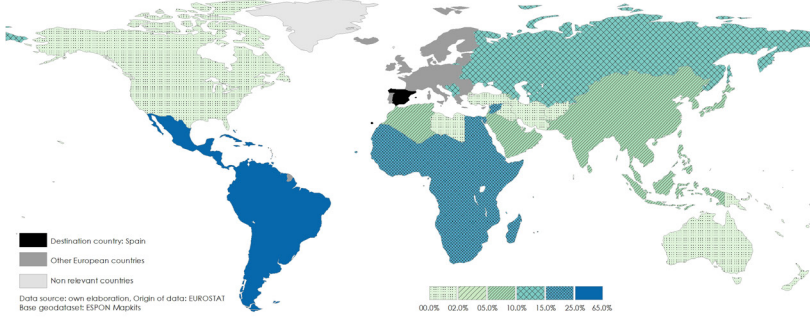
Greece: Distribution (%) of first time asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017



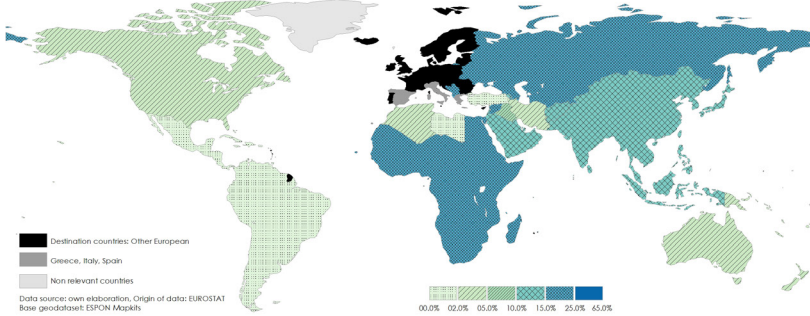
Italy: Distribution (%) of first time asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017



Spain: Distribution (%) of first time asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017

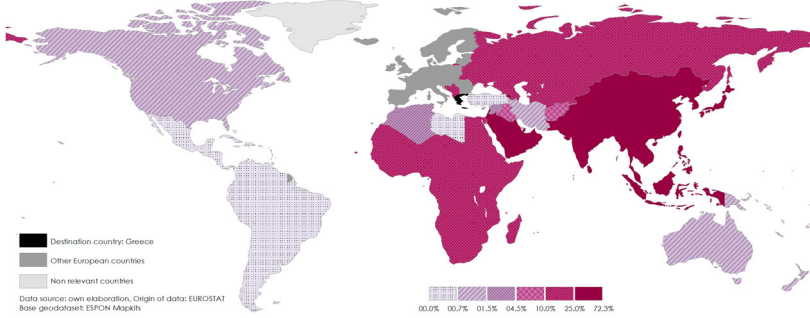


Other European Countries: Distribution (%) of first time asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017

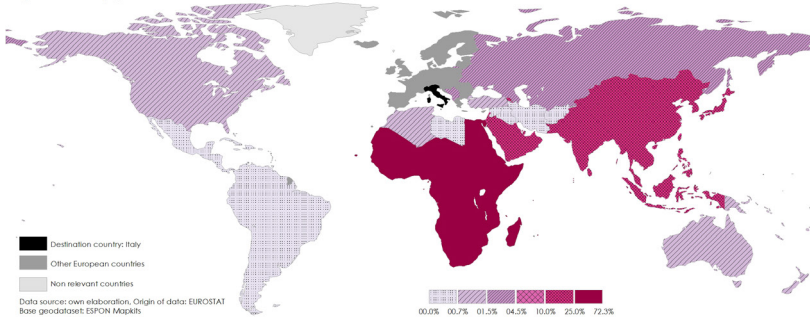


Map 2. Distribution (%) of final decisions by country of origin/group of origin's countries of asylum applicants, 2008-17.

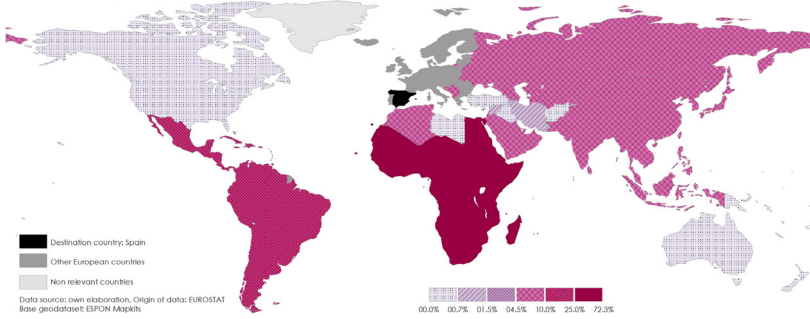
Greece: Distribution (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



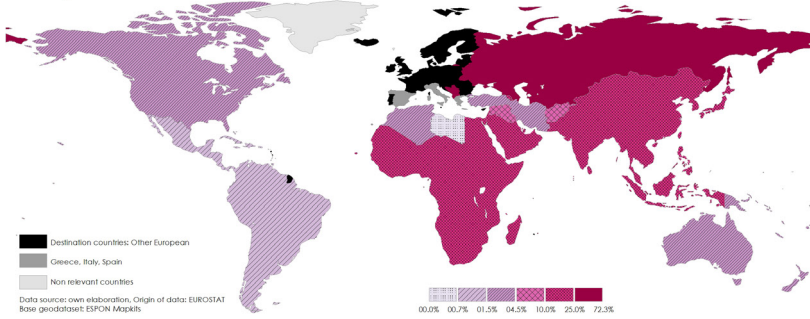
Italy: Distribution (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



Spain: Distribution (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017

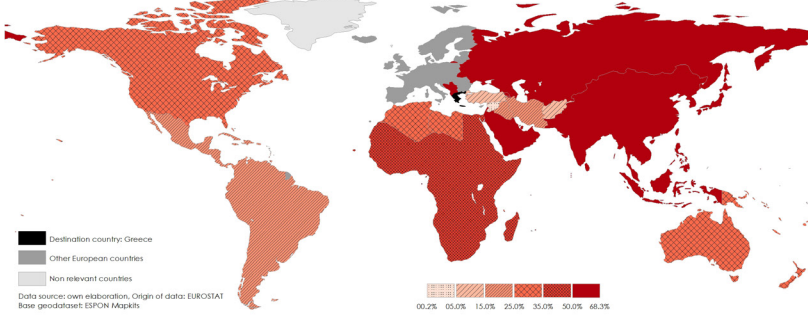


Other European countries: Distribution (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017

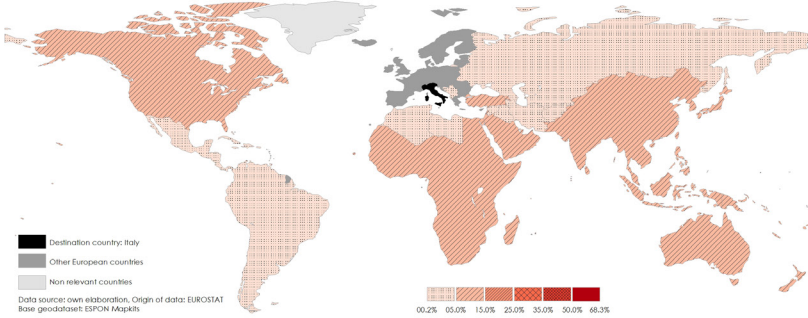


Map 3. Final decisions as percentage (%) of first time asylum applicants by country of origin/group of origin's countries, 2008-17.

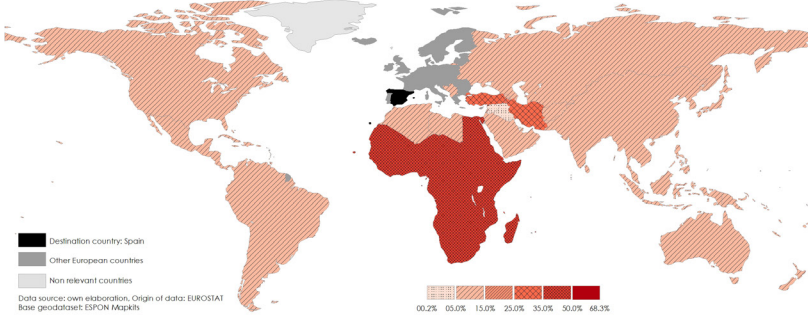
Greece: Final decisions as percentage (%) of first asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017



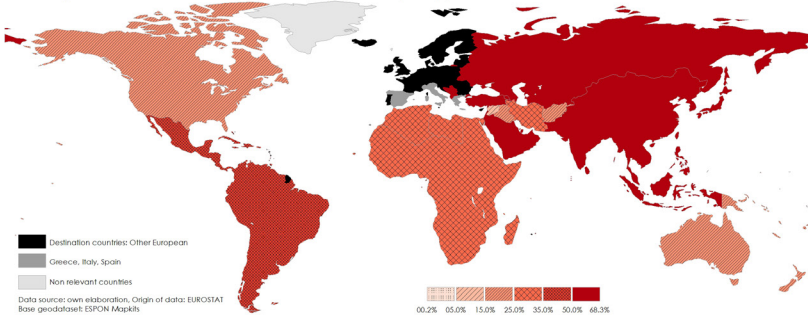
Italy: Final decisions as percentage (%) of first asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017



Spain: Final decisions as percentage (%) of first asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017

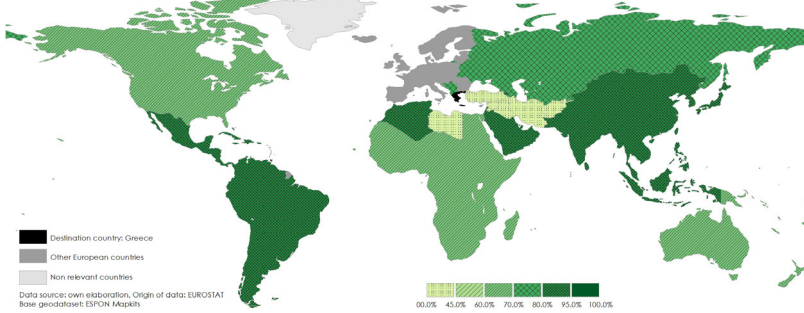


Other European Countries: Final decisions as percentage (%) of first asylum applicants, 2008 - 2017

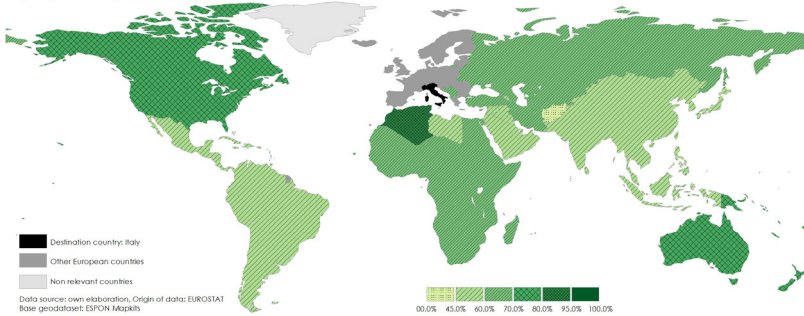


Map 4. Rejections as percentage (%) of final decisions by country of origin/group of origin's countries, 2008-17.

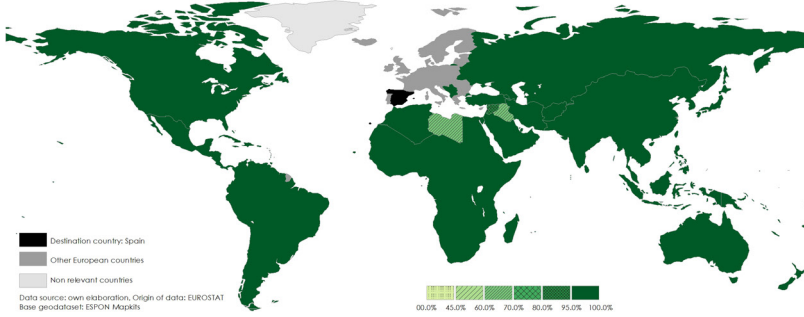
Greece: Rejections as percentage (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



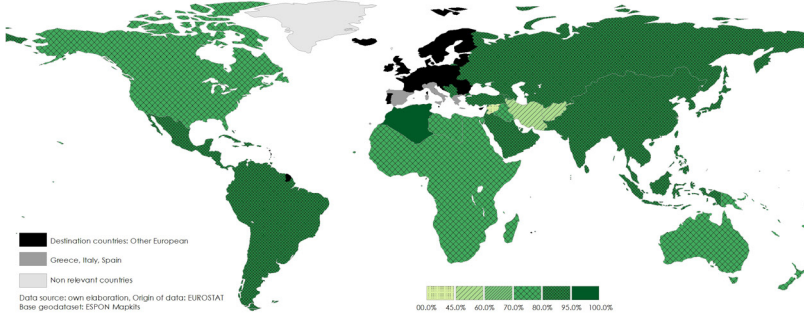
Italy: Rejections as percentage (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



Spain: Rejections as percentage (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



Other European Countries: Rejections as percentage (%) of final decisions, 2008 - 2017



1.5. Rejected asylum applications

The ratio, rejections / applications by country / group of countries of origin, for each one of the three Mediterranean countries (Table 5, Annex) gives more significant differentiations. Spain rejects —with the exception of the Iraqis and partly the Syrians— the totality of the applications (the rejections constitute 98% of the applications). On the contrary, in Greece and Italy a much higher percentage of applications are acceptable (respectively 29% and 34%); a percentage clearly higher than that of the «other EU and EFTA countries» in which positive decisions constitute only 21% of the applications. This «discriminate» confrontation of the applicants coming from certain countries is confirmed by considering the ratio rejections / applications by country / group of countries of origin (Map 4). These ratios are exceptionally high for the applicants coming from the former European socialist countries, from Africa (with the exception of Libya) and from «other Asian countries». The applications from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey are examined more favourably, even though in most of the countries under consideration, positive decisions, in the best case, do not exceed 80% of the applications (is the case of Syrians in «the other EU and EFTA countries»).

2. CONCLUSIONS

The three southern European countries (Greece, Spain, Italy) have been the main entry gateway into Europe for 3,7 million people during the last decade, the majority of whom arrived by sea. A major part of the illegal incomers attempted and succeeded in leaving these countries and settling in the most 'attractive' countries of central and north Europe.

The intensity of «refugee» flows is differentiated by country into both absolute and relative values. Greece, for example, has been the entry gateway for one out of two illegal incomers in, with 20% of the total number of applicants for asylum having been recorded in it. At the same time, the examination of the relationship between the incomers and the applicants for first time asylum in Greece, Spain and Italy has also brought forth, to a great extent, the differentiated «attraction» for the illegal incomers by country / group of countries of origin. The profile, too, of the incomers and the applicants for asylum by country / group of countries of origin has been differentiated among the three countries under consideration. The «sources» for these three countries are considerably different (Latin America for Spain, Africa for Italy, Syria, Afghanistan and former European socialist countries for Greece) and these differences are also reflected in the distribution of the first time applicants for asylum. A multitude of factors contribute to the formation of these differentiated profiles; factors relating to both to the remote and recent past (policy / cultural proximity and pre-existing networks) and to geographical proximity and/or the available routes.

Finally, considerable differentiations among Spain, Greece and Italy have been recorded as far as «handling» of these flows is concerned, as shown in the analysis of the final decisions on granting asylum. Spain has the lead, as a minor part of the applications is approved independently of the country / group of countries of origin of the applicants. Italy is characterised by considerable ‘delay’ in coming to final decisions, while Greece is characterised by a rather fast processing of them and a «more favourable» confrontation of the applicants (higher percentage of positive answers), a confrontation which, to a great extent, is related to the origin of the applicants for asylum in it (high percentage of persons coming from the embattled zone in Greater Middle East). The applicants for asylum coming from this region are the ones that receive the highest percentage of positive answers in contrast to those coming from all the other countries.

Based on the above mentioned, the key issues raised can be summarized as follows:

- What percentage of present —and future— illegal entry foreigners in these countries will be more or less obliged to stay (and, evidently, what will their distribution by nationality, gender, age and marital status be)?
- What policies must be adopted aiming at the incorporation of those who will settle for a short or longer period, taking also into account the profile of these populations differentiated from that of the great majority of the incoming migrants before the economic crisis labour?

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SOURCES

EUROSTAT <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

FRONTEX <http://frontex.europa.eu>

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/>

IOM <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>

Ministry of Migration Policy (Greece) <http://asylo.gov.gr>

Ministero dell'Interno (Italy)

Hellenic Police <http://www.astynomia.gr>

ANNEX

	<i>Ex socialist european countries</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	23,2	15,8	1,8	348,2	4,7	7,3	5,3	19,0	2,6	95,8	6,0	5,9	535,6
Greece	12,2	3,8	0,08	15,7	2,2	14,0	48,1	17,3	3,5	33,4	0,7	1,4	152,4
Spain	10,7	5,2	0,3	13,8	9,2	0,6	15,1	0,5	0,5	5,9	25,1	0,2	78,2
Total	46,1	24,8	2,1	377,7	7,0	22,0	68,7	36,8	6,6	135,1	31.720	7,5	766,2
other EU and EFTA countries	893,7	105,7	24,4	911,9	59,0	387.490	966,0	543,0	146,3	473,2	41,5	155,4	4.707,7
TOTAL	939,8	130,5	26,6	1.289,6	66,0	409.455	1.034,7	579,8	152.920	608.365	73,2	162.880	5.473,8

	<i>Ex socialist european countries</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	4,3	2,9	0,3	65,0	0,9	1,4	1,0	3,6	0,5	17,9	1,1	1,1	100
Greece	8,0	2,5	0,0	10,3	1,4	9,2	31,5	11,3	2,3	21,9	0,4	0,9	100
Spain	13,7	6,7	0,3	17,6	0,2	0,8	19,6	0,6	0,6	7,6	32,1	0,2	100
Total	6,0	3,2	0,3	49,3	0,9	2,9	9,0	4,8	0,9	17,6	4,1	1,0	100
other EU and EFTA countries	19,0	2,2	0,5	19,4	1,3	8,2	20,5	11,5	3,1	10,1	0,9	3,3	100
TOTAL	17,2	2,4	0,5	23,6	1,2	7,5	18,9	10,6	2,8	11,1	1,3	3,0	100

Table 2a. Final decisions by country of origin/ by group of countries of origin of applicants, 2008-17 (thousands)

	<i>Ex socialist european countries</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	0,6	385	10	20,4	0,3	0,03	0,01	0,1	15	6,1	0,07	0,3	28,2
Greece	7,5	1,2	20	7,1	0,2	2,7	1,6	2,6	0,7	22,8	0,2	0,4	46,9
Spain	0,7	0,7	15	5,4	0,06	0,02	0,1	0,04	0,1	0,6	2,5	0,02	10,2
Total	8.795	2,2	45	32,8	0,5	2,8	1,8	2,71	0,8	29,5	2,7	0,7	85,3
other EU and EFTA countries	517,0	35,6	6.410	307,8	36,9	,5	71,9	105,4	45,1	255,4	18,0	34,5	1.509,5
TOTAL	525,8	37,8	6.455	340,6	37,4	78,3	73,7	108,1	45,9	284,9	20,6	35,2	1.594,7

Table 2b. Distribution (%) of final decisions by country of origin/ by group of countries of origin, 2008-17

	<i>Ex socialist European countries</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	2,0	1,4	0,0	72,3	0,9	0,1	0,0	0,4	0,1	21,5	0,2	1,0	100
Greece	16,1	2,5	0,0	15,0	0,4	5,8	3,4	5,5	1,4	48,7	0,3	0,9	100
Spain	6,9	6,5	0,1	52,8	0,5	0,1	1,2	0,3	1,2	5,8	24,2	0,2	100
Total	10,3	2,6	0,1	38,5	0,6	3,2	2,1	3,2	0,9	34,6	3,1	0,9	100
other EU and EFTA countries	34,3	2,4	0,4	20,4	2,4	5,0	4,8	7,0	3,0	16,9	1,2	2,3	100
TOTAL	33,0	2,4	0,4	21,4	2,3	4,9	4,6	6,8	2,9	17,9	1,3	2,2	100

Table 3. Final decisions as % first applicants by country of origin/ by group of countries of origin of applicants, 2008-17

	<i>Ex socialist european countries</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	2,4	2,4	0,6	5,9	5,4	0,4	0,2	0,6	0,6	6,3	1,1	5,0	5,3
Greece	61,6	30,9	26,7	44,7	8,8	19,4	3,4	14,8	19,2	68,3	19,1	29,5	30,8
Spain	6,6	12,6	5,9	39,0	32,4	2,4	0,8	7,6	26,4	10,0	9,8	10,5	13,0
Total	10,3	2,6	0,1	38,5	0,6	3,2	2,1	3,2	0,9	34,6	3,1	0,9	100
other EU and EFTA countries	57,9	33,7	26,2	33,8	62,5	19,5	7,4	19,4	30,8	54,0	43,3	22,2	32,1
TOTAL	56,0	29,0	24,3	26,4	56,6	19,1	7,1	18,6	30,0	46,8	28,2	21,6	29,1

Table 4. Rejections by country of origin/ by group of countries of origin of applicants, 2008-17 (thousands)

	<i>Ex socialist countries of Europe</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	0,4	0,3	0,05	13,9	0,2	0,01	0	0,05	0,01	3,5	0,04	0,2	18,6
Greece	5,7	1,1	0	4,4	0,08	1,3	0	1,1	0,3	18,7	0,1	0,3	33,5
Spain	0,7	0,7	0,01	5,2	0,06	0,01	0,1	0,04	0,1	0,6	2,4	0,02	9,9
Total	6,7	2,1	0,01	23,5	0,3	1,3	0,7	1,2	0,4	22,8	2,6	0,5	62,0
other EU and EFTA countries	478,6	33,9	4,6	239,0	30,7	55,5	14,3	59,8	27,0	213,3	16,5	24,5	1.197,7
TOTAL	485,3	36,0	4,6	262,6	31,0	56,8	14,955	61,0	27,4	236,0	19,1	25,0	1.259,7

Table 5. Rejections as % of final decisions by country of origin/ by group of countries of origin, 2008-2017

	<i>Ex socialist countries of Europe</i>	<i>Maghreb</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Other African Countries</i>	<i>Turkey</i>	<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Other countries of Asia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>Other countries</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Italy	63,4	85,7	50,0	67,9	62,7	50,0	50,0	40,9	66,7	58,2	53,8	75,9	65,9
Greece	75,0	89,8	0,0	63,2	42,1	46,7	36,8	43,0	41,8	81,6	84,6	64,3	71,4
Spain	98,6	100,0	66,7	97,7	100,0	66,7	88,0	100,0	100,0	97,5	97,6	100,0	97,7
Total	76,2	92,1	33,3	71,8	59,0	46,8	40,6	43,6	50,9	77,1	95,9	69,9	72,7
other EU and EFTA countries	92,6	95,3	71,1	77,6	83,3	73,6	19,8	56,8	59,8	83,5	91,9	71,1	79,3
TOTAL	92,3	95,1	70,8	77,1	83,0	72,6	20,3	56,4	59,6	82,8	92,5	71,0	79,0