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Deliverable

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AORI

Athens Observatory for
Refugees & Immigrants

«Migration & Refugees
Coordination Center &
Observatory program»

Survey – B

Eleonas Accommodation Site
Refugees and Immigrants Census

Executive summary

January 2017

Public Issue was established in 2001.

It specializes in political and election opinion polls, as well as media, social and consumer behavior surveys.

In early 2004, for the first time in Greece, Public Issue began to monitor trends in public opinion systematically using the method of telephone surveys.

**Member of: European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR),
Association of Greek Market & Opinion Research Companies (SEDEA).**

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ATHENS OBSERVATORY FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Introduction

The “Athens Observatory for Refugees and Immigrants” (AORI) is a comprehensive research program which combines both census type field surveys and public opinion polls. Its aim is to help the Municipality have a better understanding of the refugee/immigration phenomenon, through a specific analysis of the characteristics of the population, who stay in the hosting facilities of the Athens municipality. In addition, it aims to reflect the residents' attitudes towards the refugee/immigrant population and their evolution over time.

The AORI surveys constitute a systematic evidence base, providing reliable information on the current situation of the refugees/immigrants within the geographical boundaries of the Municipality, as well as the existing possibilities for their inclusion and integration.

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The present report discusses the results of the Census of the Refugee/Immigrant Population, which conducted at the accommodation site at Eleonas with face-to-face interviews. The census covered all the 534 heads of the refugee households/families* and 1.600 people in total.

Specifically, the Population Census includes the following axes:

1. Social and demographic profile of the refugee/immigrant population staying at Eleonas (nationality, gender, age, marital status, previous social status etc.)
2. Experiences from the journey to Greece (decision to leave the home country, choice of destination country, passage/transit countries)
3. Forms of help and assistance received in Athens (from the citizens, church, NGOs)
4. Living conditions and everyday life in Athens (housing conditions in Eleonas, social life, circulation in the city)
5. Current economic situation of the household (expenditures, employment status of family members)
6. Refugees' education level and skills (work experience, language and IT skills)
7. The refugees' future plans and intentions

* As family are also meant the incomplete forms that have arisen as a result of the family losses caused by the war, or the divisions of families caused by unintentional movements.

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Part 1: Population of refugees and immigrants in Eleonas

Demographic profile

The refugee/immigrant population at the time of the census (i.e. November-December 2016) at the hospitality center in Eleonas amounts to 1.600 people.

- According to the census conducted by Public Issue, during the period of November-December 2016, it was found that the Syrians represent **47%** of the total (almost 1 in 2 refugees), the Afghans **35%** (1 in 3), the Iranians **10%** (1 in 10), while the rest of the population in the hospitality center, which is a total of **8%**, consists of Kurds (**4%**), Iraqis (**2%**), Palestine (**1%**) and other nationalities from Africa and Middle East (**1%**).
- As for the **gender**, 55% of the population of Eleonas consists of men and 45% of women.
- **The population of refugees is notably youthful. The average age is only 20 years.**
- Almost half of the refugees/immigrants hosted (**48%**) are aged under 18, while 34% (1 in 3) are aged 18-34 years. The age group of 35-54 years represents 16% of the population and those aged 55 years and over only 3%.
- As for the **average family size**, is three-member.
- During the Census period, a total of **43 pregnant women** and **10 persons with disability** were recorded in Eleonas.

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Education and work experience

- As for the **education level**, mainly because of the youth population, a significant portion close to **42% (4 in 10)** has not attended school. The rest are; graduates of primary education (**21%**), secondary (**29%**) and tertiary education (**8%**)

- As for **economic activity in the country of origin**, the **3 in 10 (30%)** refugees/immigrants were working (were active), while the remaining **7 in 10 (70%)** were unemployed or inactive population. The **position they had in employment was mainly:** Employers/ Self-employed (**17%**), private sector employees (**10%**) and public sector employees (**3%**).

Some of their **jobs** were: Shop salespersons (**11%**), construction laborers (**7%**), farmers (**6%**), tailors (**6%**), cooks (**3%**), hairdressers (**3%**), builders (**3%**), engineers (**3%**), electricians (**3%**) etc.

- Today, in terms of **economic activity in Greece**, only **1%** said they work (that is just **16 people**), while the remaining **99%** remains inactive.

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Greek learning

- Today, 3 in 10 refugees / immigrants (28%) take lessons in Greek, while 7 in 10 (69%) do not. *It is worth noting here that the percentage of refugees learning Greek is higher among Afghans (41%) and Iranians (61%). Conversely, it is low for Syrians (only 15%).*

IT skills

- About 1 in 3 (35%) refugees/immigrants knows how to use the computer, while the remaining 2 in 3 (64%) do not.
- However, the internet user rate is higher (52%, or 1 in 2), mainly due to the possession of smartphones (51%).
- In December 2016, only 7% of the refugees / immigrants owned a portable computer (laptop, notebook or tablet).

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Part 2: Heads of the Families

Demographic profile

The demographic composition of the refugees/immigrants' heads of the families living in Eleonas (n=534), is as follows:

Nationality:

- The heads of the families from Syria constitute 42% (4 in 10) of the total, while 1 in 3 (31%) are Afghans. The Iranians represent 14%, the Kurds 5%, the Iraqis 2% and the Palestinians 1%. The other nationalities from Africa and the Middle East constitute in total 5%.

Gender:

- Men constitute 69% of the Heads of the Family (7 in 10), prevailing over women (31%).

Age:

- Based on the census, the underage heads of the families represent 3%. Most heads of the families (59%, or 6 in 10) are young people, aged 18-34 years, 1 in 3 (34%) are aged 35-54 years, while only 4% are 55 years and older.

Marital status:

- The 2/3 (65%) of the heads of the families say they are married, while 27% say they are unmarried, 4% divorced and 3% widowed*.

Religious affiliation:

- Sunni Muslims represent 71% (7 in 10), while Shia Muslims 16% (1 in 6), followed by Christians (9%) and non-religious (3%)

* Note that the percentage of married couples includes also those whose partner is missing (10%)

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Relatives in Greece or abroad (except in the country of origin)

- When asked if they have relatives in Greece or abroad, the majority of heads of the families (56%) answered negatively. However, a significant percentage (31%, 1 in 3) said that they have relatives in another country (except in the country of origin); while 16% said they have relatives in Greece.

Most of the relatives abroad are located in Germany (20%), followed by smaller percentages in Austria (3%), Sweden (2%), Norway (1%), Switzerland (1%), England (1%), France (1%) etc.

Similarly, their relatives in Greece live at the accommodation site in Eleonas (13%), elsewhere in Athens (2%), and elsewhere in Greece (1%).

Moreover, of the married heads of the family, 65% say they live with their husband/wife in Eleonas, 24% (1 in 4 married) report that their husband/wife is in another country (mainly in Germany, but also in their country of origin, namely in Syria, Afghanistan, Iran etc.), while 10% are unaware of the fate of their partner.

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Previous social status

The population of refugees / immigrants comes from the urban centers of the countries of origin.

According to the declared geographical origin of residence of the heads of the families, the majority used to live in a big city of more than 100.000 people (69%) or in the Capital of the country of origin (18%), while a smaller percentage previously lived in a small or medium-sized city of less than 100.000 people (9%) and very few in villages (3%).

In terms of family income, the social origin of refugees is concentrated mainly in the middle (48%) and lower (33%) social class, while a smaller percentage (18%, 1 in 5) comes from the upper class.

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Personal health and psychosocial conditions

More than half of the heads of the family (55%) evaluate their personal health as "good" (26% "neither good nor bad", and 18% "bad"). Compared with two years ago, the health condition of the majority (57%) has remained unchanged ("the same"), while a significant proportion (28%), almost 1 in 4, says that "it has deteriorated".

Especially for the female heads of the families, the deterioration rate of health is particularly high and close to 43%.

It is also noted that about 1 in 2 heads of the family (52%) has visited a **hospital or health care center**. This percentage is significantly higher for women (65% versus 46% of men). The vast majority of cases, visited a public hospital / health care center (98%) and 6 out of 10 (61%) were satisfied by the services provided to them.

The heads of the family were also asked about the **sleeping conditions, good mood and appetite for food**. The replies showed that about 4 out of 10 heads of the family "can sleep well" (43%) and "have good appetite for food" (42%) most of the time, but only 3 out of 10 "are in a good mood" (29%). At this point, it should be noted that in all these three health parameters, the frequency of sleep, good mood and appetite, men are better off than women.

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Part 3: Arrival in Greece and assistance received

Journey to Greece

The main reason, for which they left their country (the country of origin) is, obviously, the war (80%) and their political opinions (13%); followed by the lack of future in their country (4%), the lack of jobs (1%) and draft evasion (1%).

The majority of refugees / immigrants came to Greece from the Aegean Sea (72%) and a smaller proportion from the Greek-Turkish border in Evros (27%).

This is also confirmed by the fact that all refugees (100%) reported Turkey as transit country.

Leaving the country of origin, the majority of refugees / immigrants (62%, 6 out of 10) was primarily planning to go to Germany; followed by much smaller percentages, saying to Greece (5%), Sweden (5%), Austria (5%), the Netherlands (3%), France (3%), the UK (3%), or Switzerland (3%). Those who originally wished Greece as “destination country” (5%), justify their choice by stating mainly that "it is a democratic country" (59%), "there is stability and security" (28%) and "it is better for their children" (17%).

In December 2016, when the Census was completed, the respondent refugees/immigrants' duration of stay in Greece was, on average, 9 months.

Asylum seeking and forms of assistance received in Athens

About 2 out of 3 heads of the family (65%) have applied for asylum (asylum seekers) and more than half (57%) are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Regarding the forms of help they received in Athens, they mainly come from Non-Governmental Organizations (65%) and to smaller percentages from the Greek citizens (23%), their compatriots in Greece (14%) and the Church (12%).

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Part 4: Living conditions and everyday life in Athens

Housing conditions in Eleonas

In general, the majority of heads of the family (55%) are satisfied with the living conditions in Eleonas. However, the **food** is spontaneously mentioned by **53%** of respondents as the **most important problem**.

From the processing of the open-ended questions of the interviews it is shown that the dissatisfaction with the food is expressed with judgments like, it is "tasteless", "underdone" and "there is no variety". Other important problems mentioned are: the accommodation (16%), the lack of money (14%) and clothing (8%), the overcrowded rooms (7%), the insufficient healthcare (5%) and the need for medicines (5%).

Subsequently, the respondents were asked in more detail to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the housing conditions in Eleonas, in several areas.

Based on the given answers, it is shown that **97%** of respondents are **satisfied** with the **electricity supply** and **95%** of the **water supply**. High satisfaction rates are also recorded regarding the cleanliness and hygiene of the area (87%), the heating / cooling (79%), the bathroom facilities (77%) and the health services (72%). Relatively satisfied, but to a lesser extent, are with the **house facilities** (66%) and **places for children** (45%).

Conversely, the refugees express **dissatisfaction** with the food (nearly everyone - 90%), the communication facilities, particularly the Internet (73%), as well as the laundry services (65%).

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Socializing and social relationships

The population of refugees / immigrants living in Eleonas feels particularly safe.

The satisfaction rate recorded in the issue of security is also universal and close to 93%. Similarly, high satisfaction is also found in terms of interpersonal relations of refugees both with the personnel of Eleonas (93%) and the other refugees (90%). In general, about 1 in 2 heads of the family (54%) is "satisfied" with the everyday life in Eleonas, as well as with the various events / activities (50%) that take place there.

Regarding the engagement with social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ etc.), 3 out of 4 heads of the family (75%) say they maintain an account, while 70% use their services daily.

This means that the majority of heads of the family does not live in isolation, but on the contrary, it is in contact with the global community of the Internet.

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Circulation in the city

The refugees move regularly in the city. The majority of heads of the family (77%) say they regularly get out of the accommodation site, either on a daily basis (37%) or several times a week (40%), while everyone say (100%) they visit the center of Athens.

Incidents of xenophobia

It is particularly important that during their stay in Athens, the majority of heads of the family, close to 88% (9 out of 10) has not encountered any incident of xenophobia.

However, a percentage of 9% report they have experienced some sort of offence. This percentage is higher among Iranians (17%), while the differentiation between women and men does not appear significant (11% for women, versus 9% for men).

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Part 5: Economic situation of the household and access to work (HOF)

Household economic situation

The majority of heads of the family (95%) holds a prepaid or debit card for their daily purchases, which has been distributed mainly by the NGO International Rescue Committee (74%) and the European Union (20%).

On average, a refugee / immigrant family in Eleonas spends 78 euros per week.

The main categories of costs, which amount to 67% of the refugees' consumer spending, are in hierarchical order:

- Food and drinks (47€)
- Phone cards and mobile phone cards (7€)
- Cigarettes and tobacco (7€)
- Milk and baby care (6€)

Minimum amounts refer to expenditure for tickets (1€) and nothing for newspapers or magazines.

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Employment of the HOF

The vast majority of heads of the family (99%) does not work today, while the 1% who said they work (that is 5 people) are employed as: cooks, client information workers and refuse workers.

It should be stressed that, 6 out of 10 heads of the family (59%) respond negatively to the question of whether they want to work in Greece.

Of the rest (41%) who respond positively, 30% are willing to do "any job". The reported preferable jobs, in ranking order, are:

- **Cooks (7%)**
- **Builders (7%)**
- **Tailors (6%)**
- **Hairdressers (5%)**
- **Shop salespersons (4%)**
- **Translators (3%)**
- **Engineers (3%) etc.**

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Part 6: Education and skills of the HOF

Education and previous work experience

Exactly half of heads of the family (50%) have completed secondary education. The rest are graduates of primary (20%) or tertiary education (15%), while a significant number has not attended school (15%).

Regarding the economic activity of heads of the family in the country of origin, 2 out of 3 (66%) say they worked, mainly as private sector employees (22%) or self-employed (21%).

The occupations mainly practiced were:

- Shop salespersons (11%)
- Builders (8%)
- Farmers (7%)
- Tailors (6%)
- Cooks (4%)
- Engineers (4%)
- Electricians (3%) etc.

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IT skills

More than half of heads of the family (54%) know how to use the computer, but only 14% say "very well".

Regarding the use of the Internet is quite widespread, since 8 out of 10 heads of the family (81%) say they use it, and almost half (49%) regularly, namely "several times a day". The widespread use of the Internet is due to the almost universal possession of smartphones (92%), while a smaller proportion (8%) says that they also have a portable computer (laptop, notebook or tablet).

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15. Language skills

The predominant native languages in the population hosted in Eleonas are:

- Arabic (46%)
- Persian (Farsi, Dari) (42%) and
- Kurdish (10%)

As an international language, English is spoken by the 40% of heads of the family at a moderate level in general (speaking, reading and writing).

Regarding Greek, only a very small percentage of heads of the family (3%) can speak, read and write at a moderate level.

Of the rest who do not speak Greek at all, 19% answered that “they are learning”, 22% “want to learn”, while -it is worth noting- that 55% do not want to learn. The importance of this negative finding is obvious, given that learning the language of the host country is one of the major facilitators for the inclusion and integration of refugees and immigrants.

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Part 7: Future plans

Information about country of origin and host country

Nearly 4 out of 10 heads of the family (39%) are regularly informed (daily or several times a week) about the situation in their home country. On the contrary, while the respective percentage about the current situation in Greece does not exceed 6%.

Intention to return / to stay

The percentage of heads of the family who intend to return home, once the situation returns to normal, amounts to 34% (i.e., 1 in 3).

Of the rest, who do not intend to return, only 8% would like to remain in Greece.

Finally, the main destination country remains Germany (61%), followed by:

- Austria (8%)
- Sweden (6%)
- Switzerland (4%)
- The Netherlands (4%)
- England (3%)
- France (3%) etc.



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