



EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK STUDY 2018

Impact of visa liberalisation on countries of destination

National Report: Greece



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EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK STUDY 2018:2

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The study was devised by the Working Group of the European Public Law Organization (EPLO).

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EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK • STUDY 2018:2
Impact of visa liberalisation on countries of destination

The European Migration Network (EMN) was established in 2003, originally as a preparatory action of the European Commission, with the aim of providing the European Commission and the Member States with objective, reliable, comparable and up-to-date data on migration and asylum, to support/build policymaking in the European Union and, hence, their national policies in these areas. Subsequently, in 2008, the Council of the EU, with the No. 381/2008/EK Judgment founded the EMN, as a permanent structure that will operate within the European Commission, with the participation of Member States in order to achieve these goals.

Further information on the EMN and its work on the website:

www.emn.europa.eu

or on the Greek website:

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EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK STUDY 2018

Impact of visa liberalisation on countries of destination

National Contribution from Greece¹

Disclaimer: The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to a Synthesis Report for this EMN Study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' (Member) State

Top-line "Factsheet"

National Contribution

Overview of the National Contribution – drawing out key facts and figures from across all sections of the Study, with a particular emphasis on the elements that will be of relevance to (national) policymakers. Please add any innovative or visual presentations that can carry through into the synthesis report as possible infographics and visual elements.

Concerning the context of developments regarding visa liberalization, the European Commission, at its announcement towards the European Parliament and the Council, on 27/09/2017, on the maintenance and strengthening of Schengen Area², mentions that: On the 12th of May 2016 the Council recommended that³, based on a proposal by the Committee⁴, the five member states most heavily affected by secondary movements coming from Greece reinstate border controls at specific sections of the internal borders. Despite the gradual improvement of the situation, the pressure at those particular five member states continued to exist and, as a result, justified the extension of border control at the internal borders⁵. On 11th May 2017 the Council authorized those 5 member states for the third and final time, based on this procedure, to extend the border controls until the 11th of November". The European Migration Network's Study for the year 2018 entitled "Impact of visa liberalization on countries of destination" aims to inform Member States and the European Commission on all the latest updates concerning the impact of visa liberalization on countries of destination in Greece, with emphasis at the incoming populations from the following countries: FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. **Section I** aims to provide information on the scale and extend of Greece's experience on a national and European level, demonstrated by quantitative and qualitative information. The Section will also analyze the short-term and long-term trends after visa liberalization was implemented, push and pull factors between the countries of origin and destination. According to the Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD) on the developments concerning the implementation of the criteria for visa liberalization, in the case of irregular migration, including readmissions, the trends between 2015 and 2016, refer to refusals of entry which increased by 91% from 15.835 to 30.305. Greece was the most heavily affected Member-State in 2016, followed by Italy. Between 2015 and 2016, the irregular stay was reduced by 30% from 47.755 to 33.445. Greece remained by far the most affected Member- State in 2016, followed by Germany. Concerning the challenges that occur from irregular migration, between 2015 and 2016, the refusals of entry lessened by 2% from 2.555 to 2.495. The countries in close proximity to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, like Hungary, Greece, Slovenia and Croatia, have been affected the most. **Section II** aims to analyze the positive impacts of the short-term visa liberalization in Greece and on Third Country Nationals, proven by quantitative and qualitative information. Usually, there are cases of Third Country Nationals who remain in the country, after the expiration of their residence permit, the so called "overstayers". **Section III** attempts to look into the migratory risks after the introduction of the visa liberalization and into the differences, concerning Greece's ability to face the challenges that occur after the implementation of visa liberalization, proven by quantitative and qualitative information. According to the Border Protection Division of the Foreigners and Border Protection Branch of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, in every case of visa liberalization, for a specific nationality, the relevant Passport Control Authorities were immediately informed, concerning the control of persons according to the provisions of Schengen Borders Code (control of entry conditions).

¹ Replace highlighted text with your (Member) State name here.

² European Commission (2017) Communication from the commission to the european parliament and the council on preserving and strengthening Schengen. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017-0570-FIN:EL:PDF>

³ Official Journal of the European Union (2016) Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/894 of 12 May 2016 setting out a recommendation for temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk (OJ L 151 of 8.6.2016, p. 8). Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016D0894&from=EL>

⁴ European Commission (2016) Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision setting out a recommendation for temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk, 4.5.2016 COM(2016) 275 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-275-EN-F1-1.PDF>

⁵ Official Journal of the European Union (2016) Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/246 of 7 February 2017 setting out a Recommendation for prolonging temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk. Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D0246&from=EL>

Official Journal of the European Union (2017) Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1989 of 11 November 2016 setting out a recommendation for prolonging temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk. Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ:L_2016_306:TOC&uri=uriserv:OJ.L_2016_306_01_0013_01_ENG

Official Journal of the European Union (2017) Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/818 of 11 May 2017 setting out a Recommendation for prolonging temporary internal border control in exceptional circumstances putting the overall functioning of the Schengen area at risk. Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D0818&from=EL>

The appropriate Passport Control Authorities were informed to pay the attention required in each case of exemption from the obligation of visa liberalization, so that during the entry/exit controls the requirements of Schengen Borders Code are followed to the letter, in order to avoid any irregular stays (or exits) of Third Country Nationals at the Schengen Area. **Section IV** aims to rate the measures taken by Greece to face potential abuse of visa liberalization, the extent of effectiveness of those measures and overall the way Greece reacted and cooperated in case of entry of asylum applicants from countries with visa liberalization. The mechanism of coordinated border controls at the internal borders, allowed the immediate detection and restoration of serious shortages at the management of external borders in Greece, while the action plan and monthly observation reports that the country subsequently submitted, outlined the measures Greece has taken to strengthen the security of Europe's external borders. The "regular" evaluation of the Greek external borders' management that took place in 2016 confirmed the progress made by the Greek authorities in border security. Finally, **Section V** aims to describe the main findings of the Study and the present conclusions about the ones responsible to develop policies on a national and European level.

SECTION 1: THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

National Contribution

The aim of this Section is to provide an insight into the scale and scope of Member States experiences after the visa-free regime at national and EU level, as evidenced by quantitative and qualitative information. The section will also analyse the short and long-term trends after the visa-free regime entered into force, pull factors and links between the countries of origin and destination.

The synthesis report will aim to include infographics and visuals, therefore please take that into account when answering the questions/filling the tables by adding any innovative or visual presentations in your national reports that can carry through into the synthesis report. We also welcome any photos/images which are captioned, relevant and (data) protected with your national contribution.

When answering the questions in this section please consider the statistical data as presented in the tables listed below and detailed in Section 1.2:

Table 1.2.1: Total number of external border-crossings (persons) by nationals of visa-free countries;

Table 1.2.2: Total number of detections of irregular border-crossings from nationals of visa-free countries;

Table 1.2.3: Total number of short-stay visa applications by third country;

Table 1.2.4: Total number of short-stay visa application refusals by third country;

Table 1.2.5: Total number of asylum applications received from visa-free countries;

Table 1.2.6: Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries;

Table 1.2.7: Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries;

Table 1.2.8: Total number of positive and negative decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to visa-free countries);

Table 1.2.9: Total number of residence permits applications (all residence permits) by third country;

Table 1.2.10: Total number of identity document fraud instances by third country;

If you do not have data as requested in the above tables, please explain why this is the case after each table in the relevant box.

Please do not leave any answer box or table cell blank or empty and insert N/A, NI or 0 as applicable⁶

⁶ N/A – not applicable, NI – no information, 0 - collected data resulted in 0 cases.

Section 1.1: Description of national situation

Q1.1 Please provide an analysis of the short term (within two years) and long-term (beyond two years) trends which appeared in your Member State after the commencement of visa-free regimes disaggregated by region and third countries of interest.⁷

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Tables 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5 and 3.2.2.

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

According to the Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD) on the developments concerning the implementation of the criteria for visa liberalization, in the case of irregular migration, including readmissions, the trends between 2015 and 2016, refer to refusals of entry which increased by 91% from 15.835 to 30.305. Greece was the most heavily affected Member-State in 2016, followed by Italy⁸ (See Table 1 of Q1.1.).

Table 1 of Q1.1 Refusals of entry for citizens of Albania

<i>Refusals of entry for citizens of Albania</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	1.135	1.715	2.195	15.990	12.495	12.260	13.240	15.835	30.305
Greece	305	670	1.015	9.000	7.415	4.845	3.800	4.440	15.930
Italy	355	435	575	4.930	2.920	3.105	3.375	3.760	5.280
Croatia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.125	1.560	1.730	1.955
Hungary	10	35	50	210	180	840	1.400	1.795	1.855
France	45	105	60	170	90	150	105	335	1.510

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Between 2015 and 2016, the irregular stay was reduced by 30% from 47.755 to 33.445. Greece remained by far the most affected Member- State in 2016, followed by Germany⁹ (See Table 2 of Q1.1).

Table 2 of Q1.1 Illegal stay by citizens of Albania

<i>Illegal stay by citizens of Albania</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	71.920	68.655	52.170	16.640	17.665	25.815	29.895	47.755	33.445
Greece	65.480	63.140	47.120	11.225	10.525	15.555	15.090	16.910	11.335
Germany	755	615	460	545	855	1.345	1.920	17.995	10.520
France	1.210	635	560	1.495	1.750	3.170	5.255	5.540	4.635
Italy	3.635	2.875	2.820	1.715	2.230	2.265	2.390	2.555	2.270
Switzerland	0	465	440	500	680	810	925	1.035	935

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Concerning the challenges that occur from irregular migration, between 2015 and 2016, the refusals of entry lessened by 2% from 2.555 to 2.495¹⁰. The countries in close proximity to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, like Hungary, Greece, Slovenia and Croatia, have been affected the most¹¹. After all the detections by the French have increased (See Table 3 of Q1.1.)

⁷ Please use information such as: increase of entries, number of asylum applications, refusals of entry, return and removal decisions in your answers.

⁸ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

⁹ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹⁰ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹¹ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Table 3 of Q1.1 Refusals of entry for citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

<i>Refusals of entry for citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	2.115	2.300	4.165	3.320	2.325	2.465	2.560	2.555	2.495
Hungary	110	215	515	555	495	770	915	755	785
Greece	305	450	1.415	950	565	480	510	395	380
Slovenia	425	1.035	1.090	835	475	520	450	450	355
Croatia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	165	275	285	200
France	30	20	10	15	15	15	15	45	160

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

At the beginning of the implementation of the visa liberalization for Moldova, the asylum applications from Moldovan citizens in the Schengen countries abruptly increased: from 475 (in 2014) to 1.850 (in 2015) to 3.675 (in 2016). Those numbers can be mainly attributed to Germany, where the number of asylum applications increased from 270 (in 2014) to 1.565 (in 2015) to 3.405 (in 2016). In all cases, over 95% of the asylum applications were from first time applicants (See Table 4 of Q1.1).

Table 4 of Q1.1 Yearly total number of asylum applications by citizens of Moldova

<i>Yearly total number of asylum applications by citizens of Moldova</i>	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	435	315	475	1.850	3.675
Germany	35	70	270	1.565	3.405
Greece	20	20	10	35	45
Italy	10	5	20	35	35

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

The monthly data showed that the peak of the monthly asylum applications was in March 2016 (660 asylum applications in all of Schengen, out of which 640 in Germany) with the number progressively declining after the summer and significantly after December 2016, on average during the first six months of 2017¹² (See Table 5 of Q1.1).

Table 5 of Q1.1 Monthly asylum applications by citizens of Moldova

<i>Monthly asylum applications by citizens of Moldova</i>	2016 M07	2016 M08	2016 M09	2016 M10	2016 M11	2016 M12	2017 M01	2017 M02	2017 M03	2017 M04	2017 M05	2017 M06	2016 2 nd half	2017 1 st half
Schengen+ area	215	285	115	250	355	510	265	130	85	45	85	110	1.730	720
Germany	195	265	100	230	330	495	245	115	50	35	35	25	1.615	505
Netherlands	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	5	15	0	35	65	15	125
Italy	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	10	0	5	5	5	35
Greece	0	10	5	5	5	5	0	0	5	5	5	5	30	20

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

The recognition rate was high (over 10% in 2015), but was reduced (in 2% at 2016 and further in about 1% during the first semester of 2017)¹³. Concerning the challenges of illegal migration, according to Eurostat data, in 2015 entry was forbidden to 1.330 Georgian nationals at the external borders of Schengen + Area. In 2016, this number was significantly smaller: 810.

¹² Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹³ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

According to the operational data EBCGA received from the Schengen + countries, the trend is the continuous number of entry refusals during the first semester of 2017 in comparison to the second semester of 2016, increase compared to the first semester of 2016. The quarterly EBCGA data in 2017 appear to demonstrate an increase in April – June compared to January – March. In 2016, most refusals of entry were by Poland, Greece and France¹⁴ (See Table 6 of Q1.1).

Table 6 of Q1.1 Refusal of entry for citizens of Georgia

<i>Refusal of entry for citizens of Georgia</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	370	6.050	3.315	2.820	8.965	8.160	3.185	1.330	810
Poland	40	5.685	2.885	2.340	8.245	7.250	1.345	505	200
Greece	50	125	75	75	95	160	210	135	130
France	30	25	15	30	20	30	5	25	105
Romania	25	5	20	15	10	25	230	170	55

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

According to Eurostat data, 5.4405 Georgian nationals were arrested for being illegally in the Schengen + Area in 2015 and 5.240 in 2016. The operational data EBCGA received in 2017 show similar trends for the first semester of 2017 (slight decline compared to the second semester of 2016 but increase compared to the first semester of 2016). In 2016 Germany (1.810), Greece (865), France (615), Spain (495), Austria and Italy reported most of the irregular stays¹⁵ (See Table 7 of Q1.1).

Table 7 της Q1.1 Illegal stay by citizens of Georgia

<i>Illegal stay by citizens of Georgia</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	4.745	6.785	5.095	4.360	5.425	5.165	6.550	5.405	5.240
Germany	460	605	710	585	1.085	1.380	1.580	1.495	1.810
Greece	1.915	2.395	1.340	850	795	590	820	1.055	865
France	0	410	400	285	390	400	905	830	615
Spain	635	595	440	355	290	245	390	455	495

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

According to Eurostat's annual data, the number of asylum applicants in the Schengen + Area increased from 8.110 in 2015 to 8.700 in 2016. In 2016 the member-states most affected were Germany (3.770), France (1.165), Greece (690) (720) and the Netherlands (595)¹⁶ (See Table 8 of Q1.1).

Table 8 της Q1.1 Yearly total number of asylum application by citizens of Georgia

<i>Yearly total number of asylum application by citizens of Georgia</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Schengen+ area	5.340	10.985	7.465	7.450	11.620	9.750	8.570	8.110	8.700
Germany	285	640	750	525	1.430	2.485	3.180	3.195	3.770
France	460	540	1.435	1.740	2.680	2.695	1.610	1.325	1.165
Sweden	225	370	290	280	750	620	805	890	720
Greece	2.240	2.170	1.160	1.120	895	535	350	385	690
Netherlands	75	425	610	235	250	215	335	265	595
Switzerland	480	640	640	400	725	655	465	405	465
Austria	510	975	370	260	300	255	415	405	350
Belgium	275	385	365	400	505	370	430	300	240
Italy	65	85	80	30	65	105	90	135	195
Poland	70	4.180	1.085	1.735	3.235	1.240	720	390	125

¹⁴ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹⁵ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹⁶ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Eurostat's monthly data show an increase during the first semester of 2017 (average 771) in comparison to 2016 (average 721), but if we compare the first semester of 2017 with the second semester of 2016 (average 791)¹⁷ (See Table 9 of Q1.1).

Table 9 της Q1.1 Monthly asylum application by citizens of Georgia (2016-2017)

Monthly asylum application by citizens of Georgia (2016)	2016 M 01	2016 M 02	2016 M 03	2016 M 04	2016 M 05	2016 M 06	2016 M 07	2016 M 08	2016 M 09	2016 M 10	2016 M 11	2016 M 12	2016 1 st half	2016 2 nd half
Schengen+ area	590	685	645	605	610	770	915	855	785	815	745	635	3.905	4.750
France	100	105	80	85	125	115	60	105	100	90	110	90	610	555
Germany	205	280	230	275	220	360	525	480	390	345	275	180	1.570	2.195
Greece	55	65	70	25	45	45	65	35	55	60	85	85	305	385
Sweden	70	70	70	60	50	50	50	65	55	65	65	50	370	350
Italy	5	15	15	15	25	25	10	5	10	25	25	20	100	95
Switzerland	40	25	40	30	35	55	60	40	30	30	35	35	225	230
Netherlands	25	30	60	40	40	40	60	45	40	70	80	65	235	360
Austria	30	30	30	10	20	20	20	40	45	40	30	40	140	215
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	10	15	5	5	0	40
Monthly asylum application by citizens of Georgia (2017)	2017 M 01	2017 M 02	2017 M 03	2017 M 04	2017 M 05	2017 M 06	2017 1 st half							
Schengen+ area	690	720	830	725	830	835	4.630							
France	85	105	110	125	160	175	760							
Germany	205	205	215	270	240	170	1.305							
Greece	70	75	85	65	110	105	510							
Sweden	90	65	80	40	50	70	395							
Italy	30	25	45	20	45	50	215							
Switzerland	35	35	45	25	50	50	240							
Netherlands	75	85	75	40	35	40	350							
Austria	25	30	45	35	20	40	195							
Iceland	0	5	5	5	5	40	60							

Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

If one compares the last two months for which Eurostat data appear to be reliably complete, May-June 2017 (830 and 835) in the same months of 2016 (610 and 770), a 20% increase is observed. Among the most exposed Schengen countries, the asylum applications decrease in Germany but increase in France, Greece and Iceland and appear to remain steady in the other countries¹⁸. The recognition rate of the first instance asylum applications submitted by Georgian nationals was 6,62% in 2015 and 6,48% in 2016¹⁹.

¹⁷ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹⁸ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

¹⁹ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

Q1.2. What are the main links between the countries of origin and your Member State or the applicable “pull factors”²⁰ disaggregated by region and third countries of interest?

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Albania re-enforced the operational cooperation with the member states most affected by irregular migration from Albania, including information exchange with the member states on Schengen entry bans. Albania’s practice to conduct “entry interviews” with the travelers at Border Crossing Points (BCP) must respect the travelers’ fundamental rights. Since July 2017, Albanian authorities closely cooperate with most member-states to tackle the irregular migration of unaccompanied minors, the facilitation of irregular migration, the operational cooperation against irregular migration and the information exchange, obligations of visa liberalized travel. Information cross-checking with member states’ authorities allowed Albania, in August and September 2017, to convince 4271 Albanian travelers with entry bans to the SIS not to proceed their movement towards the E.U.. Albania has also commenced negotiations with the European Commission, which will allow the deployment of EBCG members at its territory. Despite the fact that the pressure in Albania by mixed migration flows is manageable, such an agreement could provide a more extended level of protection for the control of mixed migration flows alongside this route. Albania also modified its law on foreign nationals to further align itself with the E.U. acquis on legal migration²¹. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has also commenced negotiations with the European Commission, which will allow the deployment of EBCG members at its territory. Those negotiations are expected to be completed in the near future, adding a new level of protection for the control of mixed migration flows alongside the Western Balkan migratory route. It has also concluded agreements with Austria, Hungary and Serbia for the management of mixed migration flows. The country has also modified its law on foreign nationals to align itself with the E.U. standards on legal migration and hosted a small number of migrants after the closure of the Western Balkan route in March 2016. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Concerning the implementation of the readmission agreement with the E.U., the E.U. member states reported a satisfactory level of cooperation. Eurostat data show a steady trend of approximately 5.000 return decisions per year (out of which more than 2.000 are from Germany) and a steady return percentage of approximately 73% during the period 2015-2016. 13 Implementation Protocols (IP) were completed with 15 E.U. member states: Estonia, Malta, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Germany, France, Slovakia, Greece and Slovenia. An IP will soon have to be signed with Italy, as the internal procedures are coming to an end. The negotiations with Sweden are in progress. Spain, Portugal, Lithuania and Latvia have stated their willingness to also complete the IP²². Serbia: Readmission agreements of third country nationals have been signed with 19 countries including Greece²³.

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

N/A

Q1.3. Which national institutions and/or authorities are involved in implementing the visa liberalisation process and what is their respective role in this process?²⁴

N/A

Q1.4. Were there changes in your national legislation in connection with the introduction of the visa-free regimes? If yes, please explain their scope and impact on nationals coming from the third countries analysed in this study?

N/A

Q1.5. Where there any public/policy debates related to the visa liberalisation process in you (Member) State? If yes, what were the main issues discussed and how did this impact national policy?

Concerning the procedure of free entry, coordinating meetings of all the pertinent bodies took place, for instance the Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to regulate control at border entry points; the aim is to ensure that after visa liberalization, the asylum applications will not increase. However, concerning Georgian and Ukrainian nationals, only those who possess biometric passports enter the country without visa²⁵.

Q1.6. Do you have any other remarks relevant to this section that were not covered above? If yes, please highlight them below.

N/A

²⁰ These may include: presence of diaspora, historical links between countries, social assistance received by asylum seekers, probability of receiving a residence permit/long-term visa, schemes (tourism, family ties, business) for attracting certain categories of migrants using visa-free regime.

²¹ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

²² Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

²³ Source: European Commission (2017) Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism SWD/2017/0480 final 20.12.2017. Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017SC0480&qid=1539090329180&from=EN>

²⁴ For example: changes in instructions for border patrol agents and in equipment.

²⁵ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A, C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SECTION 1.2: STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them in particular when the statistics provided are partial, had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differs from the below, or of first-hand research) or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

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Table 1.2.1: Total number of external border-crossings (persons) by nationals of visa-free countries²⁶

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
Total number of external border-crossings (persons) by nationals of visa-free countries												
FYROM	467.779	649.680	758.971	1.314.712	1.314.813	1.360.821	983.881	875.572	1.087.339	940.439	929.409	Arrivals/departures
Montenegro	86	5.265	8.822	15.045	17.957	18.963	20.289	23.798	24.473	25.688	29.836	Arrivals/departures
Serbia	23.974	36.825	329.911	736.507	792.017	864.130	624.126	735.773	815.893	952.015	1.311.484	Arrivals/departures
Albania	2.521.586	3.094.575	3.437.924	3.991.517	4.974.947	4.278.759	3.467.213	3.212.362	3.205.428	3.392.902	3.460.949	Arrivals/departures
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22.776	38.275	34.397	34.062	28.160	31.682	28.123	37.394	40.715	45.863	61.421	Arrivals/departures
Moldova	30.561	35.505	40.941	49.422	53.192	47.467	42.122	68.526	86.976	95.397	109.906	Arrivals/departures
Georgia	82.188	81.198	74.173	71.837	67.057	70.028	64.497	63.953	59.342	68.798	108.902	Arrivals/departures
Ukraine	92.680	114.895	108.447	161.627	203.616	287.019	388.965	279.984	216.560	245.975	319.037	Arrivals/departures
Total	467.779	649.680	758.971	1.314.712	1.314.813	1.360.821	983.881	875.572	1.087.339	940.439	929.409	
Total number of external border crossings (persons)²⁷												

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

Cumulative data (total number) are impossible to be extracted from electronic databases since it was not mandatory to check European nationals, until April 2017, based on the applicable legislation (Regulation 399/2016, as was modified with Regulation 458/2017 «Schengen Borders Code»), during border crossings.

²⁶ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. The indicator refers to border-crossings at the external borders of the EU plus NO.

²⁷ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of border crossings (persons).

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Table 1.2.2: Total number of detections of irregular border-crossings from nationals of visa-free countries²⁸

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of detections of irregular border-crossings from nationals of visa-free countries													
FYROM	459	366	213	86	52	83	42	68	68	44	34	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro	8	1	2	3	1	2	0	2	2	9	1	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia	58	85	57	41	32	46	46	45	45	83	26	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania	66.818	72.454	63.563	50.175	11.733	10.602	15.389	16.751	16.751	16910	11333	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	3	4	0	3	1	1	2	2	6	3	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova	316	319	162	89	59	63	33	62	62	114	70	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia	1.441	2.961	2.522	1.456	879	793	568	838	838	1057	865	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine	105	198	154	119	111	71	89	107	107	152	115	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total	69.206	76.387	66.677	51.969	12.870	11.661	16.168	17.875	18.375	12.447	14.349	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total number of detections of irregular border-crossings²⁹	112.364	146.337	126.145	132.524	99.368	76.878	43.002	77.163	911.471	204.820	68.112	Total arrests for illegal entry and stay in the territory	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

At the implementation of Cartography there are logs from the year 2014 and after, when there is a differentiation of the cause of arrest. The previous years the arrests are cumulative for all the offenses on Foreigners' law³⁰.

²⁸ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Frontex: Number of detections of illegal border-crossings by sea and land; Available at: <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>
²⁹ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of irregular border crossings.
³⁰ Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division.

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Table 1.2.3: Total number of short-stay visa applications by third country³¹

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of short-stay visa applications by third country													
FYROM				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Montenegro				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Serbia				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Albania					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Bosnia and Herzegovina					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Moldova									N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Georgia													
Ukraine													
Total													
Total number of short-stay visa applications – all third countries³²													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

³¹ See DG HOME Schengen Visa statistics, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy_en#stats. For MS that still apply visa requirements, please remove the N/A and complete the table in full.
³² All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of short-stay visa applications.

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Table 1.2.4: Total number of short-stay visa application refusals by third country³³

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
Total number of short-stay visa application refusals by third country				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
FYROM				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Montenegro				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Serbia												
Albania					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Bosnia and Herzegovina									N/A	N/A	N/A	
Moldova												
Georgia												
Ukraine												
Total number of short-stay visa application refusals – all third countries³⁴												

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

³³ See DG HOME Schengen Visa statistics, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy_en#stats. For MS that still apply visa requirements, please remove the N/A and complete the table in full.
³⁴ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of short-stay visa application refusals.

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Table 1.2.5: Total number of asylum applications received from visa-free countries³⁵

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of asylum applications received from visa-free countries													
FYROM		0**	0**	0**	0**	0**	1***			1***	1***	6***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***
Montenegro		0**	0**	0**	5**	0**						1***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***
Serbia		5**	5**	10**	5**	5**	3***	3***	1***	2***	12***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***	
Albania		200**	515**	695**	275**	385**	419***	569***	1003***	1420***	2450***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		0**	0**	0**	0**	0**	1***	1***				3***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***
Moldova		115**	60**	40**	45**	20**	14***	12***	34***	46***	39***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***	
Georgia		2240	2170**	1160**	1120**	895**	342***	350***	386***	687***	1107***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***	
Ukraine		55**	50**	50**	30**	45**	11***	110***	227***	122***	85***	Eurostat**/ Asylum Service***	
Total													
Total number of asylum applications – all third countries ³⁶													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

The Asylum Service started functioning (and as a result the Regional Asylum Office and its Asylum Units started receiving applications for international protection) at 07/06/2013³⁷.

³⁵ See Eurostat: Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded) [migr_asyappctza]. For Georgia and Ukraine, monthly date may be considered.

³⁶ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of asylum applications.

³⁷ Υπηρεσία Ασύλου, Υπουργείο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής.

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Table 1.2.6: Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries³⁸

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries													
FYROM		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Montenegro		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Serbia		0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1*	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Albania		0	0	0	5	0	5	2*	1*	3*	3*	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Bosnia and Herzegovina		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Moldova		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Georgia		0	0	0	10	5	5	10	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Ukraine		0	0	0	0	0	0	5*	42*	24*	17*	0	Eurostat/* Asylum Service
Total								7*	44*	27*	20*		Asylum Service

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

The Asylum Service started functioning (and as a result the Regional Asylum Office and its Asylum Units started receiving applications for international protection) at 07/06/2013³⁹.

³⁸ Βλ. Eurostat: First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded) [migr_asydcfst]; Total positive decisions, including only refugee status and subsidiary protection, rounded up to the unit of 5.
³⁹ Asylum Service, Ministry for Migration Policy.

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Table 1.2.7: Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries⁴⁰

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from visa-free countries													
FYROM		0	0	0	0	5	5	1**	0	0	2**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Montenegro		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Serbia		5	5	5	5	0	1**	2**	0	0	7**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Albania		175	465	250	405	315	321**	576**	639**	970**	1676**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		0	0	0	0	0	1**	1**	1**	0	0	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Moldova		105	90	15	25	20	13**	10**	22**	18**	25**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Georgia		1960	1665	685	1280	1120	232**	376**	320**	420**	633**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Ukraine		50	50	15	40	30	7**	67**	132**	69**	50**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	
Total							575**	1033**	1114**	1477**	2393**	Eurostat/ ** Asylum Service	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

The Asylum Service started functioning (and as a result the Regional Asylum Office and its Asylum Units started receiving applications for international protection) at 07/06/2013⁴¹.

⁴⁰ See Eurostat: First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex, Annual aggregated data (rounded) [migr_asydcfst]

⁴¹ Asylum Service, Ministry for Migration Policy.

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Table 1.2.8: Total number of positive and negative decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to visa-free countries)⁴²

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		
Total number of <u>positive</u> decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to visa-free countries)													
Syria							76	509	2785	1652	4803	Asylum Service	
Afghanistan							67	489	347	205	1600	Asylum Service	
Iraq							3	67	107	113	1675	Asylum Service	
Iran							19	117	53	159	370	Asylum Service	
Palestine							9	8	60	52	446	Asylum Service	
Total							174	1190	3352	2181	8894	Asylum Service	
Total number of <u>negative</u> decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to visa-free countries)													
Pakistan							327	1190	1503	2331	5954	Asylum Service	
Albania							321	576	639	970	1676	Asylum Service	
Bangladesh							136	416	655	700	891	Asylum Service	
Afghanistan							205	793	820	240	519	Asylum Service	
Syria							20	159	122	1331	947	Out of a total of 2579 negative judgments concerning Syrian applicants, 2537 are Inadmissible Decisions because of the application of the safe third country principle (Readmission Procedures).	
Total							1009	3134	3739	5572	9987		

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

The Asylum Service started functioning (and as a result the Regional Asylum Office and its Asylum Units started receiving applications for international protection) at 07/06/2013⁴³.

⁴² This is to provide a broader context; any nationality may be included in the top five. See Eurostat: First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded) [migr_asydcfsta]; Total positive decisions, including only refugee status and subsidiary protection, rounded up to the unit of 5.

⁴³ Asylum Service, Ministry for Migration Policy.

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Table 1.2.9: Total number of residence permits applications (all residence permits) by visa-free country⁴⁴

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of residence permits applications (all residence permits) by visa-free country													
FYROM	800	1253	765	970	558	647	475	511	366	331	353	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Montenegro	3	6	3	4	1	1	1	4		1		Ministry for Migration Policy	
Serbia	1079	1766	1378	1676	1172	1344	1137	1136	849	816	946	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Albania	184403	344068	161780	309412	134569	223137	102628	144899	104372	85645	113408	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	211	263	175	182	107	161	94	110	78	93	104	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Moldova	5136	8362	4182	7075	3299	5194	2617	2705	1636	1294	1522	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Georgia	9889	12713	7060	10796	6137	8835	5673	6469	5400	5916	7315	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Ukraine	7456	13819	7094	11689	5942	9247	5339	5658	3838	3275	3900	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total	208977	382250	182437	341804	151785	248566	117964	161492	116539	97371	127548	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total number of residence permits applications (all residence permits)⁴⁵	272888	464604	229120	403809	188238	297183	148646	198503	150084	131723	167367	Ministry for Migration Policy	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁴⁴ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat - Number of first residence permits issued by reason, EU-28, 2008-2016 [migr_resfirst]

⁴⁵ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of residence permit applications.

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Table 1.2.10: Total number of identity document fraud instances by visa-free country⁴⁶

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
FYROM													
Montenegro													
Serbia													
Albania													
Bosnia and Herzegovina													
Moldova													
Georgia													
Ukraine													
Total													
Total number of identity document fraud instances⁴⁷													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

There is an increase in the number of migrants that reside in Greece, who try to board flights within the Schengen Area with fraudulent documents. Concerning specific nationalities in relation to the abuse of travel documents, no change was observed in those particular nationalities (at the above Table). The Albanian nationals remained the most mentioned nationality, despite the 11% decline, that was recorded in the third trimester of 2017 in comparison to the previous trimester. The Syrian nationals constitute the second nationality during the third trimester of 2017, particularly due to their significant increase within the Schengen Area. The detection of Ukrainian nationals was reduced by 17% at the third trimester of 2017 in comparison to the previous trimester of the same year. It is possible that this trend will continue due to the visa liberalization applicable since 11 June 2017. The Iranian nationals showed a steady increase of 23% at the third trimester of 2017 in comparison to the previous trimester⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ Οι πληροφορίες να παρασχεθούν με την εισαγωγή εθνικών δεδομένων όπως συνελέγησαν από τις αρμόδιες αρχές.

⁴⁷ Όλες οι εθνικότητες λαμβάνονται υπόψη, για τον υπολογισμό του ποσοστού του συνολικού αριθμού περιστατικών πλαστογράφησης εγγράφων ταυτότητας.

⁴⁸ Frontex (2017) Western Balkans Annual Risk Analysis. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/WB_ARA_2017.pdf

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Table 1 (1.2.10): Document fraud

Country of issuance - Document Type	2016		2017				2017 Q4		per cent of total	Highest share
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% change on year ago	prev. Qtr		
PASSPORTS	701	712	656	782	675	757	6.3	12	34	Not specified (16%)
France-Authentic	55	37	43	73	47	67	81	43	8.9	Not specified (42%)
Spain-Authentic	28	25	19	37	33	43	72	30	5.7	Not specified (47%)
Turkey-Counterfeit	1	4	1	4	13	22	n.a.	69	2.9	Turkey (64%)
Morocco-Authentic	7	12	14	14	7	13	8.3	86	1.7	Morocco (100%)
Mali-Authentic	6	8	14	11	7	13	63	86	1.7	Not specified (46%)
United Kingdom-Forged	20	9	15	12	11	12	33	9.1	1.6	Afghanistan (58%)
Germany-Forged	2	3	6	4	11	12	n.a.	9.1	1.6	Iran (67%)
Greece-Forged	7	17	21	12	11	10	-41	-9.1	1.3	Syria (30%)
Italy-Authentic	5	7	2	5	6	10	43	67	1.3	Iraq (30%)
Guatemala-Forged	1	7	2	1	2	10	43	n.a.	1.3	Morocco (20%)
Other	569	583	519	609	527	545	-6.5	3.4	72	Iran (11%)
ID CARDS	281	371	299	311	352	417	12	18	19	Morocco (22%)
Spain-Authentic	68	63	68	57	76	75	19	-1.3	18	Morocco (72%)
Romania-Counterfeit	10	24	17	34	30	61	154	103	15	Moldova (80%)
Italy-Stolen Blank	17	38	37	25	25	29	-24	16	7.0	Albania (34%)
France-Authentic	11	20	23	22	22	26	30	18	6.2	Not specified (31%)
Italy-No More Details	9	7	5	4	9	26	271	189	6.2	Albania (77%)
France-Counterfeit	7	11	11	15	30	20	82	-33	4.8	Algeria (25%)
Italy-Counterfeit	23	31	21	24	17	17	-45	0.0	4.1	Albania (41%)
Spain-Counterfeit	5	5	2	3	14	15	200	7.1	3.6	Iran (60%)
Greece-Counterfeit	7	14	11	19	20	12	-14	-40	2.9	Syria (25%)
Italy-Forged	21	41	28	20	9	11	-73	22	2.6	Albania (45%)
Other	103	117	76	88	100	125	6.8	25	30	Turkey (25%)
VISA	629	404	465	459	428	481	19	12	22	Ukraine (16%)
Poland-Authentic	195	77	204	147	134	123	60	-8.2	26	Ukraine (59%)
France-Counterfeit	26	12	29	19	23	77	542	235	16	Iran (30%)
Germany-Counterfeit	29	35	11	30	37	56	60	51	12	Cameroon (30%)
Lithuania-Authentic	61	69	57	55	54	35	-49	-35	7.3	Kyrgyzstan (23%)
Italy-Counterfeit	18	19	16	31	30	22	16	-27	4.6	Cameroon (45%)
Spain-Counterfeit	13	4	13	8	1	22	n.a.	n.a.	4.6	Angola (27%)
France-Authentic	14	15	26	21	22	14	-6.7	-36	2.9	Not specified (21%)
Latvia-Authentic	90	25	13	12	4	12	-52	200	2.5	Belarus (33%)
Germany-Forged	7	5	4	6	4	10	100	150	2.1	Not specified (20%)
Sweden-Stolen Blank	0	1	1	0	0	10	n.a.	n.a.	2.1	Iran (90%)
Other	176	142	91	130	119	100	-30	-16	21	Russia (14%)

Source: Frontex (2017) Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) Quarterly. Quarter 4 (Q4) • October–December 2017. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q4_2017.pdf

Table 2 (1.2.10): Document fraud

Country of issuance - Document Type	2016		2017				2017 Q4		per cent of total	Highest share
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% change on year ago	prev. Qtr		
STAMPS	223	218	183	179	171	167	-23	-2.3	7.6	Ukraine (19%)
Germany-Counterfeit	18	15	7	14	7	21	40	200	13	Turkey (24%)
France-Counterfeit	21	20	8	9	11	18	-10	64	11	Brazil (17%)
Italy-Counterfeit	6	14	16	14	10	16	14	60	9.6	Albania (19%)
Poland-Counterfeit	27	23	24	22	20	9	-61	-55	5.4	Ukraine (100%)
Hungary-Counterfeit	18	10	11	8	11	9	-10	-18	5.4	Serbia (56%)
Portugal-Counterfeit	2	2	1	1	4	8	n.a.	100	4.8	Syria (13%)
Greece-Counterfeit	9	12	11	8	13	7	-42	-46	4.2	Albania (43%)
Lithuania-Counterfeit	14	23	20	15	11	7	-70	-36	4.2	Ukraine (43%)
Italy-Forged	3	1	5	5	3	7	n.a.	133	4.2	Ukraine (57%)
Morocco-Counterfeit	1	1	3	7	1	7	n.a.	n.a.	4.2	Morocco (100%)
Other	104	97	77	76	80	58	-40	-28	35	Ukraine (16%)
OTHER	41	64	61	56	62	59	-7.8	-4.8	2.7	Ukraine (19%)
Ukraine-Counterfeit	3	6	10	6	6	13	117	117	22	Ukraine (77%)
Italy-Counterfeit	5	8	15	8	5	9	13	80	15	Sri Lanka (22%)
Guatemala-Counterfeit	1	0	0	0	0	8	n.a.	n.a.	14	Cuba (13%)
United Kingdom-Counterfeit	2	2	1	0	1	2	0.0	100	3.4	Romania (50%)
Syria-Counterfeit	8	7	3	1	0	2	-71	n.a.	3.4	Syria (100%)
Sri Lanka-Authentic	0	0	0	0	0	2	n.a.	n.a.	3.4	Sri Lanka (100%)
Canada-Counterfeit	0	0	0	0	0	1	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	Not specified (100%)
Austria-Stolen Blank	0	0	0	0	0	1	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	Serbia (100%)
Cyprus-Stolen Blank	0	0	0	0	0	1	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	India (100%)
Bosnia and Herzegovina-Forged	0	0	0	0	0	1	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	Ukraine (100%)
Other	22	41	32	41	50	19	-54	-62	32	Egypt (21%)
Total	2 193	2 071	1 962	2 069	1 973	2 197	6.1	11	100	

Source: Frontex (2017) Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) Quarterly. Quarter 4 (Q4) • October–December 2017. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q4_2017.pdf

Section 2: Positive impact of visa liberalisation on (Member) States

National Contribution

The aim of this Section is to analyse the positive impact of short-term visa liberalisation on countries of destination (i.e. Member States) and third-country nationals as evidenced by quantitative and qualitative information.

The synthesis report will aim to include infographics and visuals, therefore please take that into account when answering the questions/filling the tables by adding any innovative or visual presentations in your national reports that can carry through into the synthesis report. We also welcome any photos/images which are captioned, relevant and (data) protected with your national contribution.

When answering the questions in this section please consider the statistical data as presented in the tables listed below and detailed in Section 2.2:

Table 2.2.1: Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments from the visa-free countries;

Table 2.2.2: Total number of first-time residence permit applications received from visa-free country nationals;

Table 2.2.3: Total number of first residence permits issued for remunerated activities reasons to visa-free country nationals;

Table 2.2.4: Total number of first residence permits issued for education reasons to visa-free country nationals;

Table 2.2.5: Total number of first residence permits issued to entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons) from visa-free countries.

If you do not have data as requested in the above tables, please explain why this is the case after each table in the relevant box.

Please do not leave any answer box or table cell blank or empty and insert N/A, NI or 0 as applicable.

SECTION 2.1: DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL SITUATION

Q2.1. What impact did the visa liberalisation have on your (Member) State? Please provide a short description of your national situation.

According to the Border Protection Division of the Foreigners and Border Protection Branch of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, the consequences of the visa liberalization in Greece were the increase of crossings at the Border Crossing Points as well as the increase of refusals of entry.

Q2.1.1 If applicable, please categorise your answer to Q2.1 by third country:

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

N/A

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

Usually, cases of third country nationals are observed who the so-called “overstayers” remain in the country, after the expiration of their residence permit⁴⁹.

Q2.2. Did your (Member) State assess the impact of visa liberalisation as positive? If yes, please explain the reasons for your positive assessment and how this was reached (i.e. who was involved in the assessment and how they reached this conclusion). If no, explain why this is the case.

N/A

Q2.2.1. Did your collaboration with relevant third countries improve within the field of migration since the introduction of visa liberalisation?⁵⁰ If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

N/A

Q2.2.2. Did your (Member) State identify specific economic benefits?⁵¹ If yes, please list them and provide a short description for each.

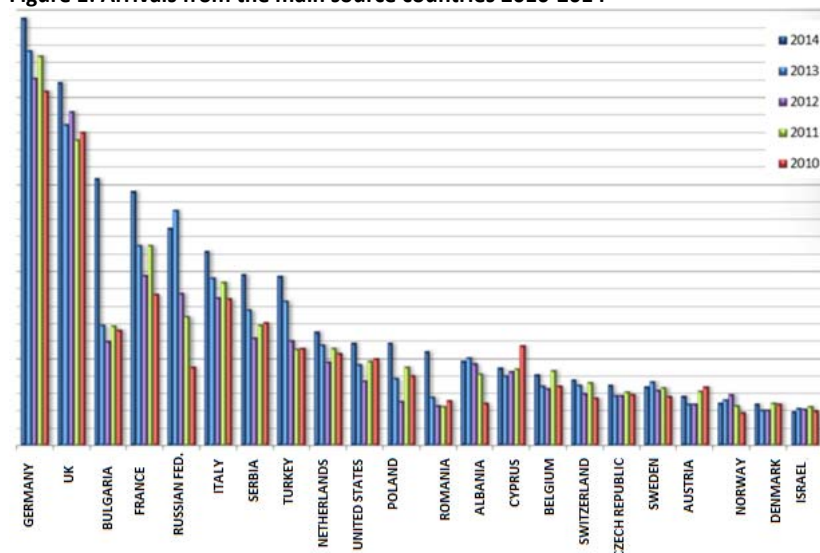
N/A

Q2.2.3. Did your (Member) State experience a growth in tourism⁵² from third-country nationals under the visa liberalisation regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.1.

Hatzidakis (2015:41) mentions that Over the last few years, fluctuations have taken place major upheavals in the markets of the main sources influx of tourists to the country (see Figure 1). According to him, this is a constituent of them developments in the state of the economy of these countries, the redeployments in the organization of the international travel market, political developments on the international scene but also the increasing competition between traditional and emerging tourist destinations (Harzidakis, 2015:41). The following figure from the Ministry of Tourism displays the movement patterns of tourists per country of destination for the 2010-2014:

Figure 1: Arrivals from the main source countries 2010-2014



Source: Hatzidakis, A. (2015) Trends of the Tourism Movement 2008-2015. Athens: Hellenic Tourism Organization/National Printing House http://www.gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_basic_pages/Xatzidakis_2015.pdf

⁴⁹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

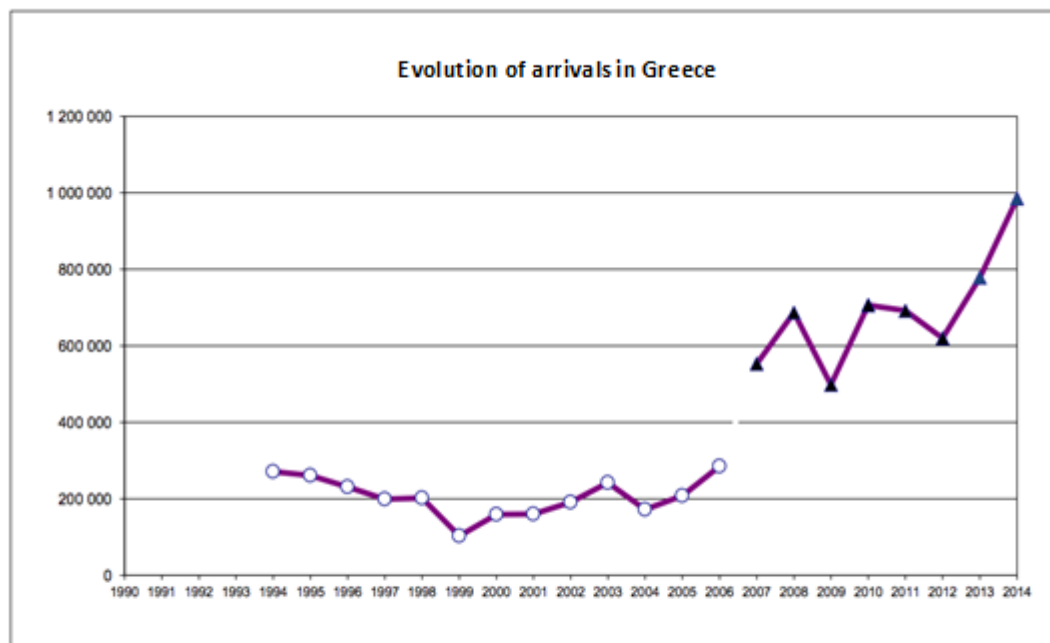
⁵⁰ For example: in cases of return and readmission.

⁵¹ For example: an increase in direct investments from the respective third countries to your (Member) State.

⁵² For example: third-country national visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments increased.

The following graph is about Serbia.

Figure 2: Evolution of arrivals in Greece



Note:

The arrivals data comes from the Hellenic Statistical Authority, but they are based on different calculation systems

- Period 1990-2006: arrivals of foreigners are recorded by the National Statistical Service of Greece

- 2007-2014: arrivals of non-residents are calculated on the basis of the Bank of Greece Border Survey

- The number of arrivals by 2011 also includes arrivals of Montenegrin residents

Tables - diagrams: A. Hatzidakis

Source: Hatzidakis, A. (2015) Trends of the Tourism Movement 2008 -2015. Athens: Hellenic Tourism Organization/National Printing House
http://www.gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_basic_pages/Xatzidakis_2015.pdf

Q2.2.4. Did your (Member) State experience an impact on its labour market since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples, including background information on the link between visa free travel and access to the labour market in the national context.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.3.

Additionally, Law 4251/2014 in Article 11 on the determination of the number of entries for labor, mentions that" with the decision of the Ministries of Interior, of Foreign Affairs, Development and Competitiveness, of Maritime Affairs and the Aegean, of Labor and Social Security, which is published during the last trimester of each second year, the maximum number of positions for dependent employment granted to third country nationals, per District and specialization is determined. With the same decision an increase of the maximum number of positions up to 10% may be anticipated, in order to fill unforeseen and urgent needs, as well as any other relevant detail"⁵³. Law 4384/2016 constituted a legislative landmark in labour, concerning the employment in the field of illegally residing third country nationals in the agricultural economics. Specifically, Article 58 states: at the Law 4251/2014 the article 13a is added, as follows: Article 13a, Employment of illegally residing third country nationals in the agricultural economy: "1. If the vacancies foreseen at the joint ministerial decision of paragraph 1 article 11 of this document on employment in agricultural economy are not covered by the procedure of the articles 12 and 13 of this document, the employer can submit to the relevant authority of the Decentralized Administration in his place of residence an application to exceptionally employ third country nationals, who do not have a residence permit in the country, in order to address the urgent needs of agricultural exploitation". "2. The applications are examined based on the date of submission by the Coordinator of the Decentralized Administration, who can publish decisions of approval for the exceptional employment of third country nationals that do not have a residence permit, up until the number of employees foreseen by the joint ministerial decision of paragraph 1 article 11 is completed. The approval rendered for the exceptional employment of third country nationals constitutes grounds to postpone the removal and the provision of article 24 of the Law 3907/2011 (A' 7) are implemented accordingly". See the legal document in details at the relevant link ⁵⁴.

⁵³ https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/ethnikes_theoriseis/2014/4251.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-agrotike-anaptukse/nomos-4384-2016-phek-78a-26-4-2016.html>

Q2.2.5. Did your (Member) State experience a growth in the number of students arriving from third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.4.

There was an increase of the number of students, mainly due to their participation at the European programs Erasmus and Erasmus+⁵⁵.

Q2.2.6. Did your (Member) State experience a growth of entrepreneurship, including of self-employed persons from third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples, including background information on the access to self-employment from visa free regimes in the national context.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.5.

N/A

Q2.2.7. Did your (Member) State experience a growth in trade with third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples (i.e. in which sectors / what type of goods or services).

N/A

Q2.2.8. What other benefit (or positive impact) was identified by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable⁵⁶;

N/A

⁵⁵ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁶ For example: agreements with third countries for exchange of students, scholars; social benefits (social assistance, social trust and cooperation).

SECTION 2.2: STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them in particular when the statistics provided are partial, had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differs from the below, or of first-hand research) or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

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Table 2.2.1: Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments from the visa-free countries⁵⁷

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	(insert all available data or <i>at least</i> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments from the visa-free countries												
FYROM												
Montenegro												
Serbia												
Albania	638,5	587,0	621,5	775,1	1.719,3	2.077,8	2.258,9	1.841,3	1.915,4	2.978,3	3.234,8	http://goo.gl/jgHNfb
Bosnia and Herzegovina												
Moldova												
Georgia												
Ukraine												
Total												
Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments⁵⁸												

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the box below:

In detail, the arrivals from Europe, which has the largest share of arrivals (87,8%), displayed in the period January- December 2015 an increase of 6,4%, in comparison to the same period January-December 2014, while a 13,0% increase was recorded by the member states of the European Union. A significant increase of arrivals from the European countries, in absolute values, is observed, by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (28,8%), Bulgaria (23,9%), Germany (14,3%), the United Kingdom (14,7%), Italy (21,3%) and Poland (28,1%), while significant decrease in absolute values is observed by Russia (-59,0%) and Serbia (-26,2%). An increase of arrivals is also observed by the rest of the continents. Significant increase of arrivals, in absolute values, is observed by America with great contribution from the U.S.A. (3,2%) and Asia with great contribution of arrivals from Turkey (4,9%)⁵⁹. Between January- September 2015, significant increase of arrivals from European countries, in absolute values, is observed, by Bulgaria (56,8%), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (26,1%), Germany (17,8%), the United Kingdom (17,5%), Italy (26,1%) and Poland (27,1%), while significant decrease of absolute values, is observed by Russia (-62,1%) and Serbia (-26,5%)⁶⁰. In the 4th trimester of 2015, significant increase of arrivals from the European countries, in absolute values, is observed, by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (28,8%), Bulgaria (23,9%), Germany (14,3%), the United Kingdom (14,7%), Italy (21,3%) and Poland (28,1%), while a significant decrease in absolute values is observed by Russia (-59,0%) and Serbia (-26,2%)⁶¹. In the 1st trimester of 2016, Bulgaria (20,3%) has the largest involvement concerning the total of arrivals from the European countries, followed by FYROM (11,7%), Albania (9,1%). In the 2nd trimester of 2016, a significant decrease of arrivals from the European countries, is observed, in absolute values, by FYROM (-27,7%), Bulgaria (-10,5%) and France (-20,6%) while a significant increase, in absolute values is observed by the United Kingdom (13,1%), Albania (41,6%) and Romania (19,4%)⁶².

⁵⁷ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

⁵⁸ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of tourism visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments.

⁵⁹ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) (2015) Press Release, "Non-residents' arrivals from abroad": January - December 2015, Athens: ELSTAT http://www.gnto.gov.gr/sites/default/files/files_basic_pages/ELSTAT2015.pdf

⁶⁰ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT): <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/STO04/2016-Q2>

⁶¹ Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT): <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/STO04/2016-Q2>

⁶² Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT): <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/STO04/2016-Q2>

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Table 2.2.2: Total number of first-time residence permit applications received from visa-free country nationals⁶³

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of first-time residence applications received from the respective visa-free country													
FYROM	340	221	204	185	141	82	92	110	124	147	107	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Montenegro	1	1	1	2				3		1		Ministry for Migration Policy	
Serbia	266	233	370	314	344	293	447	407	383	450	408	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Albania	69786	38194	39714	33108	23810	13214	13154	17256	41260	45933	24617	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	64	39	38	25	20	31	27	31	29	56	41	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Moldova	1771	659	764	529	428	338	316	332	415	518	334	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Georgia	4363	1270	1346	1303	1437	1428	1362	1770	2204	3587	3374	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Ukraine	1736	939	1181	1322	1208	1215	1374	1216	1418	1523	964	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total	78327	41556	43618	36788	27388	16601	16772	21125	45833	52215	29845		
Total number of first-time residence applications⁶⁴	106606	53102	56144	47474	38187	24900	25747	32009	60456	73597	49293	Ministry for Migration Policy	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁶³ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

⁶⁴ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of first-time temporary residence applications.

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Table 2.2.3: Total number of first residence permits issued for remunerated activities reasons to visa-free country nationals⁶⁵

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons to visa-free country nationals													
FYROM	310	559	260	379	174	219	95	147	67	40	78	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Montenegro	2	1	1	1	1							Ministry for Migration Policy	
Serbia	404	755	416	608	302	402	188	271	126	129	182	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Albania	64191	140485	59910	110621	42011	55894	23167	29490	13432	9760	22252	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	78	97	51	77	29	50	21	31	18	10	21	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Moldova	1826	4431	1510	3540	1128	1588	510	678	261	132	269	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Georgia	3343	6866	2751	5563	2092	2789	1439	2231	1199	629	1256	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Ukraine	3454	8271	2740	6480	2162	2978	1042	1555	544	350	708	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total	73608	161465	67639	127269	47899	63920	26462	34403	15647	11050	24766	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons⁶⁶	96710	201425	85518	158477	61286	77521	34357	44405	22181	15095	32062	Ministry for Migration Policy	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁶⁵ See Eurostat: Number of first residence permits issued by reason, EU-28, 2008-2016 [migr_resfirst]

⁶⁶ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons.

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Table 2.2.4: Total number of first residence permits issued for education reasons to visa-free country nationals⁶⁷

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of permits issued for education reasons to visa-free country nationals													
FYROM	2588	2797	3222	3764	4384	4957	4973	1542	296	175	146	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Montenegro	63	58	44	37	26	23	19	15	15	18	18	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Serbia	123	118	106	99	89	75	67	54	66	70	70	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Albania	199	218	214	208	231	230	240	123	71	76	77	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	136	139	172	183	176	181	158	71	35	20	8	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Moldova		8	12	7	10	1	5	9	6	7		Eurostat	
Georgia	220	234	304	431	521	451	467	224	171	181	153	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Ukraine	137	154	195	183	203	145	178	106	96	128	127	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total	3466	3718	4257	4905	5630	6062	6102	2135	750	668	599	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total number of permits issued for education reasons⁶⁸												Ministry for Migration Policy	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁶⁷ See Eurostat: Number of first residence permits issued by reason, EU-28, 2008-2016 [migr_resfirst]

⁶⁸ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of permits issued for education reasons.

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Table 2.2.5: Total number of first residence permits issued to entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons) from visa-free countries⁶⁹

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons) from visa-free countries													
FYROM													
Montenegro													
Serbia													
Albania								1	2	2	2	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Bosnia and Herzegovina													
Moldova													
Georgia													
Ukraine	1					2							
Total	1					2		1	2	2	2	Ministry for Migration Policy	
Total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons)⁷⁰	5	4	4	11	3	10	10	4	2	2		Ministry for Migration Policy	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁶⁹ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

⁷⁰ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons).

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES OF VISA LIBERALISATION ON (MEMBER) STATES

National Contribution

The aim of this Section is to investigate migratory risks since the introduction of visa-free regimes and the differences in the capacity of (Member) States to meet emerging challenges after the visa-free regimes were established as evidenced by quantitative and qualitative information.

The synthesis report will aim to include infographics and visuals, therefore please take that into account when answering the questions/filling the tables by adding any innovative or visual presentations in your national reports that can carry through into the synthesis report. We also welcome any photos/images which are captioned, relevant and (data) protected with your national contribution.

When answering the questions in this section please consider the statistical data as presented in the tables listed below and detailed in Section 3.2:

Table 3.2.1: Total number of nationals from the visa-free countries refused entry at the external borders;

Table 3.2.2: Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the visa-free countries;

Table 3.2.3: Total number of voluntary returns (all types) by nationals of visa-free countries;

Table 3.2.4: Total number of forced returns by visa-free country;

Table 3.2.5: Total number of nationals from the visa - free countries found in illegal employment;

Table 3.2.6: Total number of smuggled persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings);

Table 3.2.7: Total number of trafficked persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings);

Table 3.2.8: Total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence from the visa-free countries (final court rulings);

Table 3.2.9: Total number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries;

Table 3.2.10: Total number of overstayers from the visa-free countries.

If you do not have data as requested in the above tables, please explain why this is the case after each table in the relevant box.

Please do not leave any answer box or table cell blank or empty and insert N/A, NI or 0 as applicable.

SECTION 3.1 : DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL SITUATION

Q3.1. Did your (Member) State face certain challenges (if any) since the introduction of visa liberalisation? Please provide a short description of your national situation.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Section 3.2, while specific challenges can be detailed in sub-questions **Q3.1.2** to **Q3.1.7**.

The challenges were mostly about third country nationals who remain after the expiration of their residence permit, the so-called “overstayers”, mainly for employment, and for residence permits on extraordinary grounds⁷¹.

Q3.1.1 If applicable, please categorise your answer to **Q3.1** by third country:

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

Q3.1.2 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in illegal employment since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.5.

Especially in cases of entry to work, and for family reunification, the citizens exceeded the stipulated three-month stay and remained in the country for years⁷². According to data from the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity/Unified Social Security Fund (EFKA in Greek) (December 2017, 14/06/2018)⁷³, out of the total number of insured individuals, 90.32% have Greek nationality, 1.58% of other EU country and 8.10% of a non-EU country. Out of the total number of individuals insured in joint businesses, 90.98% have Greek citizenship, 1.57% of another EU country and 7.45% of a country outside the EU, while the corresponding percentages in the domain of construction works are 54.44%, 2.38% and at 43.17%. Out of the total number of insured foreigners, 52.65% are of Albanian citizenship. As regards foreign men, 54.25% are of Albanian citizenship, followed by 10.08% of Pakistan nationals and 4.87% of Bangladesh nationals. As regards foreign women, 49.68% are Albanian nationals, followed by 8.17% of insured Bulgarian nationals and 7.48% of Romanians. The economic activity of insured individuals is as follows: of the total number of insured individuals, 21.96% are employed in the “Wholesale and Retail Trade” sector, 13.36% in the “Manufacturing Industries” sector and 13.06% in “Hotels and Restaurants”. 22.37% of insured individuals with Greek nationality are employed in “Wholesale and Retail Trade”, 12.75% in “Manufacturing Industries” and 12.01% in “Hotels and Restaurants”. 22.67% of insured individuals with citizenship of another EU country are employed in “Hotels and Restaurants”, 16.69% in “Wholesale and Retail” and 15.69% in “Manufacturing Industries”. Concerning insured Albanian nationals, 23.91% work in “Hotels and Restaurants”, 19.80% in “Constructions” and 17.90% in “Manufacturing Industries”. In the case of the other insured foreigners (excluding EU and Albanian nationals) 22.77% are employed in the “Manufacturing Industries”, 22.18% in “Wholesale and Retail Trade” and 21.12% in “Hotels and Restaurants”. Out of the total number of workers employed in the “Construction” sector, 29.74% are foreigners; only 4.22% of all individuals insured are employed in this sector. Similarly, of the total number of workers in “Hotels and Restaurants”, 16.94% are foreigners, 13.06% of all individuals insured are employed in this sector. Furthermore, out of the total number of workers in “Manufacturing Industries”, 13.81% are foreigners, 13.36% of all individuals insured are employed in this sector. The category of occupation with the largest number of employees in enterprises is “Office administrators”, with a percentage of 22.52%. A percentage of 25.95% of insured individuals with Greek citizenship are “Office administrators”, 21.41% are employed in “Provision of services, and Salespersons in stores and outdoor markets”, while 13.49% are employed as “Unskilled labourers, manual labourers and owner-operators”. Among insured individuals with nationality of another EU country, 30.98% are “Unskilled labourers, manual labourers and owner-operators”, 22.56% in the “Provision of services, and Salespersons in stores and outdoor markets” and 19.80% “Office administrators”. Insured Albanian citizens in the vast majority (49.80%) are employed as “Unskilled labourers, manual labourers and owner-operators”; 22.17% are employed in “Provision of services and Salespersons in stores and outdoor markets” and 9.83% as Specialized Technicians”. Regarding the other non-EU insured individuals (excluding EU and Albanian nationals), 41.93% are employed as “Unskilled labourers, manual labourers and owner-operators”, 21.10% are in “Provision of services, and Salespersons in stores and outdoor markets” and 11.43% are employed as “Office clerks”. The number of insured individuals employed in “enterprises” has decreased by 0.12%, construction work has decreased by 2.18% and the total of enterprises has decreased by 0.16%. In regard to the foreign born population, insured individuals have decreased by 4.22%. Average employment in “enterprises” increased by 0.14%, in “construction works” decreased by 6.28% and in “the total of enterprises” increased by 0.10%. The average day wage in enterprises increased by 0.75% and in the construction works it decreased by 1.01%. The average monthly monetary earnings in enterprises increased by 0.88% and in the construction work it decreased by 7.23% (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity/Uniform Social Insurance Institution, 2018). With regard to employment rates, indicative data of 2011 are presented in the Tables below, from the latest Annual Report for 2017 of the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources for Work and Employment in Greece⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A, C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁷² Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A, C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁷³ http://www.efka.gov.gr/_stats/files/apasxolisi_12_2017.zip

⁷⁴ <http://goo.gl/skctas>

To a large extent, practices supporting the social integration of third-country nationals generally concern the individuals who enter and reside legally in the country, while often there is a lack of targeted actions for special cases. The Greek state, by law, stipulates that immigrants, recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, have the right to work under the same conditions as Greek nationals. However, in regard to depended work, the state is unable to secure their recruitment, as it is unable to secure a job for the average Greek citizen. In addition, the difficulties faced by third-country nationals such as the irregular, perilous and risky way of entering the country, the break-up/disassociation from family and decollectivization from community and solidarity networks, obstacles regarding accessing employment, housing and healthcare, the lack of knowledge of the host country's language, stigmatize the life course of displaced/persecuted/refugee seeking individuals and populations, both before and after their recognition and cause serious difficulties in their social integration. Formal recognition/acquisition of the refugee status, or a residence permit, does not automatically bring about the normalization of the person's life. A new beginning for immigrants, recognized refugees and beneficiaries of international protection poses critical challenges and difficulties for both themselves and the host society. For both a better future for refugees and the fulfilment of the country's obligations to claim equal participation in European policies, the development of integration policies are necessary for those third-country nationals who are recognized by Greece and stay the country⁷⁵. As resulted from the 1990-2018 research experience, in Greece and in Europe, Main integration challenge in Greece, as shown by the research experience between 1990 and 2018), is that third-country nationals are pushed to the underground economy and undeclared work where they remain for particular extensive periods (Fouskas, 2012: 478-569, 2016, 2017)^{76, 77}. The division of labour entraps third-country nationals, almost exclusively, in the informal sector of the economy. Migrant workers are mainly found in precarious, low-status/low-wage occupations, in undeclared work and informal sector of the economy which demands for its constant reproduction a cheaper, uninsured, mobile, temporary and flexible workforce. This type of employment entraps migrant workers in a context outside labour inspections, labour law and taxation, without social insurance contributions and labour rights. The main attraction of the informal economy is the economic benefit; it includes: employers who avoid social security contributions, workers who work without a contract, individuals who have second jobs and declare only one, irregular third-country nationals who cannot legally work, those who work casually and occasionally for cash in hand, self-employed, all in full or part time or piece rate basis employment. In Greece, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary and humanitarian protection are concentrated and entrapped in manual labour, agriculture, constructions, crafts, domestic work, food services, hotel, cleaning, personal care services and itinerant trade. Also, a proportion of third-country nationals who cannot be recorded due to a lack of detection or control is trapped in illegal employment, exploitative and/or forced labour via organised crime and/or human trafficking networks. The occupations in which immigrants, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary and humanitarian protection are employed are defined as non-attractive as they offer no social prestige and are marginal and secondary; they are paid or not paid occupations outside the margins of formal employment and since they are not registered they are considered inferior by society. Greece comes first among the 21 OECD member countries, with 24% of the country's GDP⁷⁸ formed by the informal economy.

Q3.1.3 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in smuggled and/or trafficked persons from the visa-free countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Tables 3.2.6 and 3.2.7.

N/A

Q3.1.4 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.8.

The number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry is steadily increasing (see Table 3.2.8).

⁷⁵ Grizis, V., Tsinisizelis, M., Fouskas, T., Karatrantos, A. and Mine F.-M. (2015) European Migration Network Focused Study: Integration of Beneficiaries of International/Humanitarian Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Good Practices. EMN Focused Study 2015. Athens: Center for Security Studies/Hellenic Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. Brussels: European Migration Network/European Commission, <https://goo.gl/516VA7>

⁷⁶ See: Fouskas, T. (2012) "Palestinians", in Fouskas, T. *Migrant "Communities" and Labour Representation*. Athens: Papazisi Publishers, 478-569; Fouskas, T. (2013) "Low-status Work Consequences on Immigrant Workers' Organization", *International Review of Sociology*, 23(3):671-698; Fouskas, T. and Tsevrenis, V. (eds.) (2014) *Contemporary Immigration in Greece: A Sourcebook*. Athens: European Public Law Organization Publications; Cabot, H. (2014) *On the Doorstep of Europe: Asylum and Citizenship in Greece*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 64.

⁷⁷ See also: Black, R. (1992) *Livelihood and Vulnerability of Foreign Refugees in Greece: A Preliminary Report of Research on Iranian and Iraqi Refugees in Greater Athens*. Unpublished, Refugee Studies Centre/Queen Elizabeth House. Oxford: The University of Oxford; Black, R. (1994) "Livelihoods Under Stress: A Case Study of Refugee Vulnerability in Greece", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 7(4):360-377; Black, R., (1994) "Political Refugees or Economic Migrants? Kurdish and Assyrian Refugees in Greece", *Migration*, 25, 79-109; Black, R. (1994) "Asylum Policy and the Marginalization of Refugees in Greece", in Gould, W. T. S. and Findlay, A. M. (eds.) *Population Migration and the Changing World Order*. Chichester: Wiley and Sons, 145-160; Sitaropoulos, N. (2002) "Refugee Welfare in Greece: Towards a Remodeling of the Responsibility-Shifting Paradigm?", *Critical Social Policy*, 22(3):436-455; Papadopoulou, A. (2003) "'Give us Asylum and Help us Leave the Country!' Kurdish Asylum Seekers in Greece and the Politics of Reception", *Immigrants and Minorities*, 22(2-3):346-361; Esdras, D. (2014) "Border Management in Greece", in Fouskas, T. and Tsevrenis, V. (eds.) (2014) *Contemporary Immigration in Greece: A Sourcebook*. Athens: European Public Law Organization Publications, 107-116; Alobeid, M. (2014) "Syrian Refugees in Greece", in Fouskas, T. and Tsevrenis, V. (eds.) (2014) *Contemporary Immigration in Greece: A Sourcebook*. Athens: European Public Law Organization Publications, 381-394; ECRE/GCR (eds.) (2015) *Country Report: Greece. Final Report November 2015 - Asylum Information Database (AIDA) (Edited by ECRE)*. Brussels: Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)/European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE); Triandafyllidou, A. (ed.) (2016) *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*. London: Routledge.

⁷⁸ Schneider, F. and Williams, C. (2013) *The Shadow Economy*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 52-96.

Q3.1.5 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples. Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.9.

N/A

Q3.1.6 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of overstayers since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.10.

An increase in the number of people entering the country has been encountered for reasons of employment, family reunification, attendance at university institutions and asylum ⁷⁹.

Q3.1.7 Did your (Member) State encounter any signs of possible misuse of the visa liberalisation?⁸⁰; If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Yes. See above answer.

Q3.2. Did your (Member) State as a country of destination face any administrative burden⁸¹ since the introduction of the visa-free regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

The Border Protection Directorate of the Greek Police has had to increase its staff (officers) and logistics equipment at borders for more effective controls ⁸². According to the Border Protection Directorate of the Foreingers and Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police, in each case of visa liberalization for a particular nationality, the relevant Passport Control Services were immediately informed about the screening of persons in accordance with the provisions of the Schengen Borders Code (checking entry conditions).

Q3.2.1. If applicable, please list the institutions that faced administrative burdens.

According to the Border Protection Directorate of the Aliens and Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police, this Directorate is responsible for the guidance of the relevant Passport Inspection Services. These Services are required, in any case, to cope with the increasing tendency of travel traffic.

Q3.3. Did your (Member) State as a country of destination face any security risks since the introduction of the visa-free regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.

Yes, security issues have been addressed ⁸³. According to the Border Protection Directorate of the Foreign and Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police, the relevant Passport Inspection Services have been informed to pay due attention to any visa liberalization so that they are strictly adhered to during the entry/exit check the conditions set out in the Schengen Borders Code to avoid any irregular stay (or exit) of third-country nationals in the Schengen area.

Q3.3.1. Did the visa liberalisation regime increase the security risks in your (Member) State? If yes, please provide a short description explaining why and provide examples ⁸⁴.

N/A

⁷⁹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁰ For example, dealing with cases when persons enter the country legally but later become illegally employed, are staying in the country legally, but are working without a work permit or apply for asylum without reasonable grounds.

⁸¹ For example: significant increase of residence permit applications, increased demand for work permits, more time-consuming border control procedure due to the lack of visas. etc.

⁸² Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁸³ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁴ For example: did your (Member) State identify any increased terrorism risks arising from the entry or residence of respective TCNs.

Q3.3.2. . If applicable, what types of offences⁸⁵ were committed by third-country nationals in your (Member) State after the commencement of the visa-free regime?⁸⁶ Where there any significant differences compared to the time before the visa-free regime started?

As far as public order and security are concerned, Albanian-speaking organized criminal groups are particularly active in a wide range of criminal activities in the EU, although they cannot only be connected with Albania. These groups are usually poly-criminal and are involved in drug trafficking, mainly in cannabis, cocaine and heroin, migrant smuggling; organised property crime, racketeering and extortion. Albania also maintains one of the largest arms stocks in the region. Between 2012 and 2016, 144 foreign terrorist fighters have traveled from Albania to Syria to join the armed conflict. According to the authorities, there have been no new departures from 2015 until today. In order to fight against organized crime, Albania has tightened its anti-trafficking legislation and its criminal code on controlled deliveries. It has also amended its legislation to allow detection and tracing of weapons. Albania has also taken steps to improve the effectiveness of its efforts to enforce the law against serious and organized crime. Albania has also strengthened document audits on some BCPs, including Rinas Airport. Seizures of illicit drugs, particularly cannabis, have increased significantly between 2015 and 2017⁸⁷. Albania has also modified its legal framework for corruption by extending the scope of investigations of assets to criminal investigations. Relations with Europol have been deepened between 2016 and 2017, as evidenced by the number of complex joint drug trafficking operations⁸⁸. Criminals from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are involved in drug trafficking and dealing, mainly heroin. The country remains a source of archaeological objects, religious items and cultural goods moving to the EU. Some criminal groups also deal with corruption in sport, mainly betting fraud. The return of foreign terrorists is also a risk to this country. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has adopted a new national Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) in accordance with the Europol model, focusing on trafficking in human beings, particularly unaccompanied minors, and a new strategy to combat small arms trade and a new strategy in the fight against terrorism and aimed to intensify its efforts to combat drug trafficking. It has also developed a regional SOCTA with Serbia and Montenegro⁸⁹. According to the assessment of the Europol threat, Georgia's OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) are still reported as one of the most frequently represented non-EU nationalities (including dual nationals) of suspects involved in serious and organized crime in the EU. Georgian OCGs are particularly active in France, Greece, Germany, Italy and Spain. In many cases, Georgian organized crime groups are linked to the so-called thieves. These groups are particularly mobile and are mainly involved in organized crime (particularly organized burglaries and thefts), corruption, document fraud, extortion, extortion and racketeering, and their control of the criminal markets is gradually increasing. Georgia remains a transit country for various illicit goods moving to the EU, especially for drugs (heroin is the main concern)⁹⁰.

Q3.3.3. If applicable, what was the rate of offences (final court rulings) committed by third-country nationals⁹¹ in your (Member) State after the commencement of the visa-free regime? Where there any significant differences compared to the time before the visa-free regime started?

N/A

Q3.4. What is the role and impact of irregular migration facilitators that provide their services to third-country nationals with an entry ban? Please provide a short description with specific examples about your (Member) State situation and make a clear distinction between people who assist migrants and people who are profiting from facilitation.

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.6, 3.2.7 and 3.2.8.

N/A

⁸⁵ Please use this pre-defined list of categories: cybercrime; drugs offences; economic and financial offences; illicit immigration; illicit trafficking (not drug related); offences against property; offences against public order and safety; offences against public trust (e.g. fraud, forgery, counterfeiting); offences against the person; sexual exploitation of children (including child pornography); sexual offences against adults; terrorism-related activity; trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

⁸⁶ This applies to third-country nationals who do not live your country, but visited (short stay of up to 90 days).

⁸⁷ European Commission (2017) Commission staff working document Accompanying the document report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, 20/12/2017 SWD(2017) 480 final. Brussels: European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_sw_d_accompanying_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

⁸⁸ European Commission (2017) Commission staff working document Accompanying the document report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, 20/12/2017 SWD(2017) 480 final. Brussels: European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_sw_d_accompanying_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

⁸⁹ European Commission (2017) Commission staff working document Accompanying the document report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, 20/12/2017 SWD(2017) 480 final. Brussels: European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_sw_d_accompanying_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

⁹⁰ European Commission (2017) Commission staff working document Accompanying the document report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, 20/12/2017 SWD(2017) 480 final. Brussels: European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_sw_d_accompanying_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

⁹¹ See above.

Q3.4.1 How did the activities of irregular migration facilitators impact your (Member) State⁹²; Please provide a short description with specific examples about your (Member) State situation.

N/A

Q3.4.2. If applicable, please list and explain any challenges and risks identified by your country related to the activities of irregular migration facilitators, while making a clear distinction between people who assist migrants and people who are profiting from facilitation.

N/A

Q3.5. What other challenge (or negative impact) was identified by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable?

N/A

⁹² Did their activities lead to increases in irregular border-crossings, enhanced border controls or document fraud?

SECTION 3.2 : STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them in particular when the statistics provided are partial, had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differs from the below, or of first-hand research) or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

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Table 3.2.1: Total number of nationals from the visa-free countries refused entry at the external borders⁹³.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of nationals from the visa-free countries refused entry at the external borders													
FYROM	433	306	451	1416	952	566	407	510	395	381	598	Eurostat	
Montenegro	244	0	32	2	3	7	5	6	4	4	8	Eurostat	
Serbia		58	90	316	202	194	137	123	124	145	173	Eurostat	
Albania	829	306	671	1.016	9.002	7.415	4.421	3.802	4.439	15.929	17.046	Eurostat	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	8	3	1	9	20	5	4	2	9	6	Eurostat	
Moldova	61	22	24	19	24	19	11	97	82	90	137	Eurostat	
Georgia	121	52	124	74	73	94	144	208	135	130	887	Eurostat	
Ukraine	62	39	73	41	37	58	41	59	50	67	57	Eurostat	
Total	1.755	791	1.468	2.885	10.302	8.373	5.171	4.809	5.231	16.755	18.912		
Total number third-country nationals refused entry at the external borders⁹⁴.	3.416	2.058	3.000	3.804	11.158	9.416	6.290	6.444	6.890	18.145	21.177		

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁹³ See Eurostat: Third-country nationals refused entry at the external borders - annual data (rounded) [migr_eirfs]

⁹⁴ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number third-country nationals refused entry at the external borders.

Figure 3: Refusals of entry

BORDER CHECKS - REFUSALS OF ENTRY

Number per border type, Q3 2017

(only values higher than 1000 are stipulated)



Trend of the total



Source: Frontex (2017) Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) Quarterly. Quarter 3 (Q3) • October–December 2017. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit
https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/FRAN_Q3_2017.pdf

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Table 3.2.2: Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the visa-free countries⁹⁵.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the visa-free countries	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
FYROM		72455	63565	50175	11225	7295	9520	15090	12000	7730	9135	258190 Eurostat
Montenegro		5	5	0	5	0	5	5	5	5	0	35 Eurostat
Serbia		365	215	85	50	90	50	210	80	5	35	1185 Eurostat
Albania		2960	2520	1455	850	870	950	820	1240	830	840	13335 Eurostat
Bosnia and Herzegovina		320	160	90	60	105	80	60	90	60	75	1100 Eurostat
Moldova		0	0	5	0	0	0	0	10	0	5	20 Eurostat
Georgia		85	55	60	30	95	95	50	85	25	45	625 Eurostat
Ukraine		200	155	120	100	170	170	115	175	100	125	1430 Eurostat
Total		76390	66675	51990	12320	8625	10870	16350	13685	8755	10260	275920 Eurostat
Total number of return decisions issued to third-country nationals⁹⁶												

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁹⁵ See Eurostat: Third-country nationals ordered to leave - annual data (rounded) [migr_eiord]

⁹⁶ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of nationals ordered to leave.

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Table 3.2.3: Total number of voluntary returns (all types) by nationals of visa-free countries⁹⁷.

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017)

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of voluntary returns (all types) by nationals of visa-free countries													
FYROM									1	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro									0	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia									1	0	4	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania									250	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Bosnia and Herzegovina									0	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova									52	47	57	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia									628	552	551	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine									31	39	51	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total									963	638	663	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total number of voluntary returns (all types) – all third-country nationals⁹⁸					2.607	10.560	9.873	7.496	3.771	6.153	5.657	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	

and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

Table 1 (3.2.3): Voluntary returns 01/06/2016 - 31/08/2018

TOTAL FROM 01/06/2016 TO 31/08/2018		
Country of origin	Registrations in the AVRR programme	Assisted voluntary returns
Serbia	4	4
Albania	0	0
Moldova	129	121
Georgia	1380	1220
Ukraine	116	101
Total	1629	1446
Total	14592	12234

Source: International Organization for Migration – Office in Greece, 2018. Edited by Theodoros Fouskas, 2018.

Table 2 (3.2.3): voluntary returns with implemented reintegration plan 01/06/2016 - 31/08/2018

Country of origin	Implemented reintegration plan (01/06/2016-31/07/2018)
Serbia	1
Albania	0
Moldova	4
Georgia	429
Ukraine	3
Total	437
Total	14592

Source: International Organization for Migration – Office in Greece, 2018. Edited by T. Fouskas, 2018.

⁹⁷ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Number of voluntary and forced returns [migr_eirt_vol]

⁹⁸ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of voluntary returns.

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Table 3.2.4: Total number of forced returns by visa-free country⁹⁹.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of forced returns by visa-free country													
FYROM	181	133	129	98					55	13	15	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro	10	7	5						6	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia	56	69	63	45					52	22	29	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania	14403	18203	17064	48.177					9.378	6.763	6.761	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	5							6	0	1	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova	209	110	61	59					16	5	8	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia	260	247	267	336					182	128	92	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine	87	92	72	65					50	49	42	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total									9.745	6.980	6.948	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total number of forced returns - all third-country nationals¹⁰⁰					14.663	11.557	16.313	20.293	17.097	12.998	19.096	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

⁹⁹ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Number of voluntary and forced returns [migr_eirt_vol]

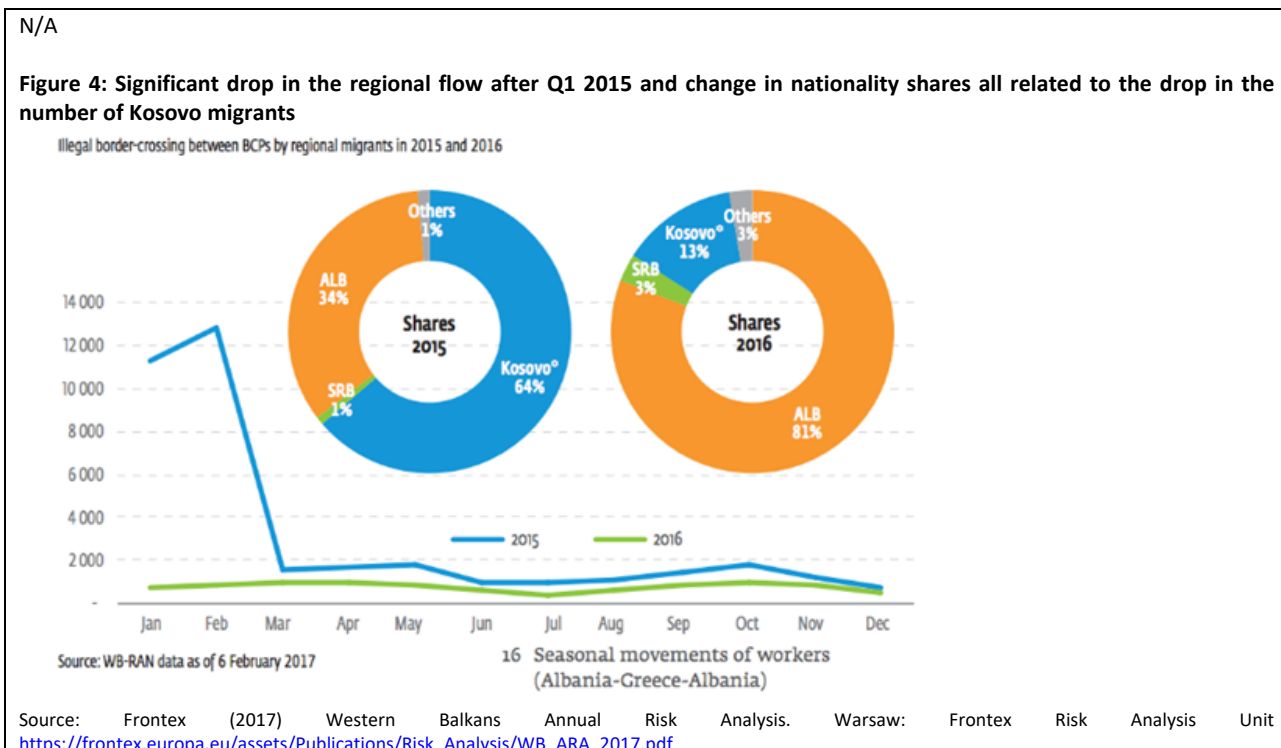
¹⁰⁰ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of forced returns.

Table 3.2.5: Total number of nationals from the visa - free countries found in illegal employment¹⁰¹

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of nationals from the visa-free countries found in illegal employment													Please name the top 5 labour sectors where TCNs were illegally employed (see footnote list for pre-defined sectors) ¹⁰² .
FYROM													See above
Montenegro													See above
Serbia													See above
Albania													See above
Bosnia and Herzegovina													See above
Moldova													See above
Georgia													See above
Ukraine													See above
Total													
Συνολικός αριθμός Total number third-country nationals found in illegal employment ¹⁰³ .													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:



¹⁰¹ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present - annual data (rounded) [migr_eipre]

¹⁰² Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining and quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; Construction; Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; Transportation and storage; Accommodation and food service activities; Information and communication; Financial and insurance activities; Real estate activities; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Administrative and support service activities; Public administration and defence; compulsory social security; Education; Human health and social work activities; Arts, entertainment and recreation; Other service activities; Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use; Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies.

¹⁰³ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number third-country nationals found in illegal employment.

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Table 3.2.6: Total number of smuggled persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)¹⁰⁴.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of smuggled persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)													
FYROM													
Montenegro													
Serbia													
Albania													
Bosnia and Herzegovina													
Moldova													
Georgia													
Ukraine													
Total													
Total number of smuggled persons from third countries (final court rulings)¹⁰⁵													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

¹⁰⁴ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

¹⁰⁵ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of smuggled persons from third countries.

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Table 3.2.7: Συνολικός αριθμός θυμάτων ανθρώπινης διακίνησης από χώρες χωρίς θεώρηση (τελικές δικαστικές αποφάσεις)¹⁰⁶.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of <u>trafficked</u> persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)													
FYROM						1							Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Montenegro													Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Serbia			1										Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Albania	1	5	5		2	8	1	4					Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Bosnia and Herzegovina													Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Moldova	4												Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Georgia			1										Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Ukraine	3	1	1		2			1					Hellenic Police* http://goo.gl/VGMuaR
Total	8	6	8		4	9	1	5					
Total number of <u>trafficked</u> persons from third countries (final court rulings)¹⁰⁷.													

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

¹⁰⁶ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

¹⁰⁷ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of trafficked persons from third countries.

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Table 3.2.8: Total number of identified facilitators¹⁰⁸ of unauthorised entry, transit and residence¹⁰⁹ from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)¹¹⁰.

Facilitators during arrest and not on the basis of final judgments

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date</u>)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)													
FYROM	13	7	5	3	1	3	4	2	4	6	42	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia	0	6	7	0	1	0	1	3	2	1	7	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania	549	807	553	363	154	120	139	196	181	111	145	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova	4	6	4	1	0	0	1	6	3	8	6	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia	33	71	44	20	6	21	12	21	18	13	17	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine	8	24	14	32	10	0	3	14	74	26	52	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total	607	921	627	419	172	144	160	242	282	167	269	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence (final court rulings)¹¹¹.	1421	2.211	1.716	1.150	848	726	843	1.171	1.501	950	1.399	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Greece	321	478	356	183	110	97	159	193	257	207	223	Please add the number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence from EU MS (top 5 EU nationalities)	
Bulgaria	107	148	117	60	75	43	74	101	100	68	107	Please see above	
Romania	20	28	37	33	25	13	19	17	20	10	10	Please see above	
Germany	3	12	10	9	9	12	3	9	10	5	10	Please see above	
Poland	3	3	5	5	9	17	8	7	4	4			
Netherlands	2	7	4	3	4	5	3	1	1		3		
France	1	5	3	5	5	11	4	7	2	3	3		
United Kingdom		5			5				5	7	4		
Lithuania			8									Please see above	
Sweden							6	14	10	3	5		
Italy							5				11		

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

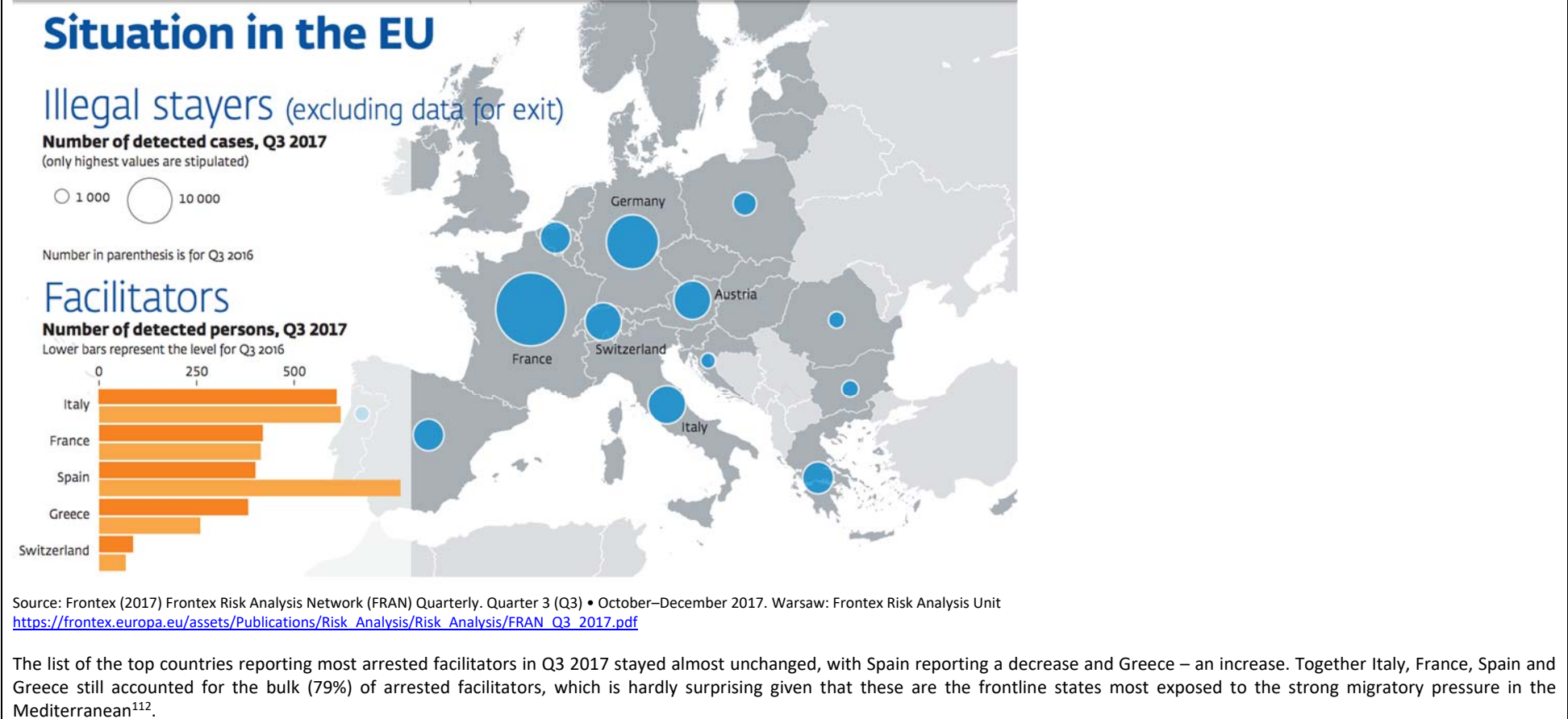
¹⁰⁸ This refers to the nationality of the facilitators. EU nationalities can be provided in the second part of the table.

¹⁰⁹ Facilitators of the unauthorised entry, transit and residence - intentionally assisting a person who is not a national of an EU Member State either to enter or transit across the territory of a Member State in breach of laws on the entry or transit of aliens, or, for financial gain, intentionally assisting them to reside within the territory of a Member State in breach of the laws of the State concerned on the residence of aliens (see Article 1(1)(a) and (b) of Council Directive 2002/90/EC).

¹¹⁰ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

¹¹¹ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence..

Figure 5: Illegal stayers and facilitators of unauthorized entry



¹¹² Frontex (2017) Western Balkans Annual Risk Analysis. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/WB_ARA_2017.pdf

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Table 3.2.9: Total number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries¹¹³.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) (insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional Information (e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries													
FYROM								49	1	9	22	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro								2	9	1	2	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia								35	67	21	23	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania		65.480	63.140	47.120	11.225	10.525	15.555	15.090	16.910	11.335		Illegal stays: Between 2015 and 2016, illegal stays declined by 30% from 47.755 to 33.445. Greece remained the most affected Member State in 2016, followed by Germany ¹¹⁴	
Bosnia and Herzegovina								1	6	2	2	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova								50	110	66	69	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia		1915	2395	1340	850	795	590	820	1055	865		Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine								90	120	80	102	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total													
Total number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present¹¹⁵.	112.364 ¹¹⁶	146.337 ¹¹⁷	126.145 ¹¹⁸	132.524 ¹¹⁹	99.368 ¹²⁰	76.878 ¹²¹	43.002 ¹²²	77.163 ¹²³	911.471 ¹²⁴	204.820 ¹²⁵	68.112 ¹²⁶		

*Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

¹¹³ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present - annual data (rounded) [migr_eipre]

¹¹⁴ European Commission (2017) Commission staff working document Accompanying the document report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, 20/12/2017 SWD(2017) 480 final. Brussels: European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_swd_accompanying_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

¹¹⁵ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of third-country national found to be illegally present.

¹¹⁶ <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/STATS/021009meta3.pdf>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/STATS/011009meta3.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2010/300110meta30.pdf>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2011/statistics2011/0102syl-yphk-allod-2010.pdf>

¹²⁰ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2012/statistics2012/27012012-syl_mi_nom_yphkootita.xls

¹²¹ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2012/statistics2012/paranomhmetanasteush/ethsia/2012ethsio_yphkoothta_allodapoi.xls

¹²² http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2014/statistics14/2013_ethsio_all_1.JPG

¹²³ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2014/statistics14/allod2014/statistics_all_2014_all.pdf

¹²⁴ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12_statistics_all_2015_all.xls

¹²⁵ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2017/statistics17/2016-gepad_ana_mina.xls

¹²⁶ http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2018/statistics18/allodapwn/2017-syll_all_mina.xls

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Table 3.2.10: Total number of overstayers from the visa-free countries¹²⁷.

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source(s), explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of overstayers from the visa-free countries													
FYROM								1	1	2	2	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Montenegro								0	0	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Serbia								3	1	2	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Albania								296	270	206	293	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Bosnia and Herzegovina								1	0	0	0	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Moldova								4	0	1	1	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Georgia								36	11	11	7	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Ukraine								5	6	8	7	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total								346	289	230	310	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	
Total number of third-country nationals overstayers¹²⁸								538	454	409	432	Hellenic Police, Migration Management Division	

* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

N/A

¹²⁷ Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present - annual data (rounded) [migr_eipre]

¹²⁸ All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of third-country national overstayers.

SECTION 4: MEASURES PUT IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH POSSIBLE MISUSE OF VISA-FREE REGIMES BY (MEMBER) STATES

National Contribution

The aim of this Section is to evaluate the measures put in place by Member States to deal with the possible misuse of visa-free regimes, how effective these measures were and more generally how did Member State respond and cooperate in cases of an influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries.

The synthesis report will aim to include infographics and visuals, therefore please take that into account when answering the questions by adding any innovative or visual presentations in your national reports that can carry through into the synthesis report. We also welcome any photos/images which are captioned, relevant and (data) protected with your national contribution. Please do not leave any answer box empty and insert N/A or NI as applicable.

SECTION 4.1: DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL SITUATION

Q4.1. Did your (Member) State implement certain measures (if any) to deal with the challenges that appeared after the commencement of the visa-free regime? Please provide a short description of your national situation.

Specific measures can be detailed in sub-questions Q4.1.2 to Q4.1.7.

After the visa liberalization, measures have been taken by the Hellenic Police to meet the challenges. As part of the regular Schengen evaluations that have taken place in Greece since 2010, interventions have been made at several border crossing points. The interventions concern the reinforcement of border crossings with trained staff, the upgrade of infrastructure, the procurement of equipment and tools, better cooperation of services and the development of effective national strategy and national risk analysis. In particular, efforts and resources at EU level have focused on the Evros region since 2010. However, following the intense migration wave in 2015 there have been interventions and actions at the borders between Greece and FYROM, Greece and Albania. These checks at the internal borders are accompanied by strict conditions: border checks have only been returned to specific parts of the internal borders affected by secondary movements originating in Greece. Secondly, the five concerned Schengen States are required to submit monthly reports to the Commission on border checks and their results¹²⁹. Most border crossing detections between Border Crossing Points (BCP) from regional migration flows (around 73%) occurred in the south of the region and this is largely related to Albanian circular migration in Greece¹³⁰. According to the Border Protection Division of the Foreigners and Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, Greece, with regard to specific measures to address the challenges that arose after the introduction of the visa-free regime, has immediately informed the relevant Services for compliance with Community and national legislation.

Q4.1.1 If applicable, please categorise your answer to Q4.1 by third country:

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Crossings towards the internal territory of Greece, are mainly made from neighbouring countries, and citizens are crossing land borders, and via airports¹³¹.

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

N/A

Q4.1.2. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to increase the efforts to promote voluntary return? If yes, for which nationalities and explain their impact.

The Assisted Voluntary Return Programs of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), supported by the Hellenic Police, have been implemented for four decades, helping many people who need or wish to return to their country of origin and reintegrate into the local society. The programs are based on the principles of free choice and timely provision of correct information to returnees¹³². The Assisted voluntary returns are increasing every year. Specifically, in November 2015, the European and Development Programs Division of the Ministry of Interior, as the Responsible Authority for the Asylum and Migration Funded Programs, issued a call for interest under the Special Repatriation Objective - National Objective "Measures for Repatriation" stating that, the countries of origin, the program will most focus on, are Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Somalia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco and Georgia.

¹²⁹ European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017:0570:FIN:EL:PDF>

¹³⁰ Frontex (2017) Western Balkans Annual Risk Analysis. Warsaw: Frontex Risk Analysis Unit https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/WB_ARA_2017.pdf

¹³¹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹³² <https://greece.iom.int/el/%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%AC%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1-%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BC>

Furthermore, following a relevant project delegation decision, the International Organization for Migration undertook the implementation of the three-years (01/06/2019-30/05/2019) program “Implementing Assisted Voluntary Returns, including Reintegration Measures”, co-funded by 75 % of European Funds (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) and 25% of National Resources, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction). The program aims at the Voluntary Return of 16.200 irregular migrants (giving priority to nationals from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Somalia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco and Georgia) and reintegration assistance, in kind, to 3.600 returnees in order to gain sustainability in their country of return and support their family and the local community. At the same time, under a pilot scheme of the program, 623 non-vulnerable nationals returning from the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Leros and Kos received economic re-integration assistance.

Through this program, a broader range of measures is being implemented to facilitate the voluntary return of third-country nationals and the reception and reintegration into their countries of origin and thus to contribute to social cohesion and to the more effective management of the migration phenomenon, as:

- Encouraging the voluntary return of third-country nationals, under full compliance with human principles and respect for human dignity,
- Facilitating and securing the organized, safe and dignified movement of the beneficiaries to their home-countries,
- supporting the economic and social reintegration of beneficiaries into their countries of origin,
- Promoting co-operation and networking among sending and receiving countries of returnees and promoting effective and uniformed implementation of common return standards in line with the policy development in this area¹³³.

Q4.1.3. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to expand the legal possibilities of stay? If yes, for which nationalities and explain their impact.

The measures taken to extend the opportunities for legal residence, regarding residence permits for exceptional reasons, especially those working in the rural economy¹³⁴. Law 4384/2016 (Government Gazette A - 78/26.04.2016) “Agricultural cooperatives forms of collective organization of rural areas and other provisions”: Article 58 of L. 4384/2016 (Leaf of the Government Gazette Of the Government Gazette A - 78 / 26.04.2016) “Agricultural cooperatives forms of collective organization of rural areas and other provisions”, Article 13A was added in Law 4251/2014 (“Immigration and Social Integration Code and other provisions”), which now provides for the possibility of employing illegally staying third-country nationals, for the service of urgent needs of the agricultural economy. In case the workplaces regarding the work in the rural economy are not covered, each employer shall submit to the competent department of the Decentralized Administration of his/her place of residence, an application for the exceptional employment of third country nationals, who are denied a residence permit in the country, to address the urgent needs of the agricultural economy. The application shall include the number of workplaces according to the corresponding land or livestock, per worker, in application of the joint ministerial decision referred to Article 11, personal data and nationality of the third-country nationals employed, the specialization and the time period employment.

Applications shall be checked in the order in which they are submitted by the Coordinator of the Decentralized Administration, who may adopt acts of approval for the temporary employment of illegally staying third-country nationals, until the number of employees, provided in the joint ministerial decision paragraph 1 Article 11, is covered. The authorization granted for the exceptional employment of third-country nationals, is a reason for postponing expulsion and the provisions of Article 24 of Law 3907/2011 (A 7) apply accordingly. The competent department of the Decentralized Administration shall send the approved act of approval to the local Police Directorate. If a return decision has already been issued, the competent police authority shall issue an attestation of postponement of expulsion pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 24 of Law 3907/2011, if there is no important matter of public order and security, in accordance with case c of Article 6. If a return decision has not been issued, it is then issued by the competent police authority and accordingly, a certificate of postponement of expulsion is issued pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 24 of Law 3907/2011. Third-country nationals whose expulsion has been postponed shall apply to the Regional Government of their place of residence for a work permit pursuant to Article 3 of the 53619/735/2015 decision of the Ministers of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, Economy, Development and Tourism and Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity (B 2631).

Q4.1.4. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight illegal employment? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.

In 2018, the relevant legislation was passed¹³⁵.

¹³³ Mrs. Alexandra Flessa, Senior Project Assistant, International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Office in Greece.

¹³⁴ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹³⁵ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q4.1.5. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight the smuggling and/or trafficking of persons from the visa-free countries? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.

The Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries continued to take measures to address the still persisting irregular migration challenges, in particular Albania. These measures are already yielding results. Cooperation on readmission continues smoothly for all Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership visa-free countries with overall high return rates. Regarding Greece, border controls have been increased and strengthened, with cross-checking gates, with more Hellenic Police officers, etc. As regards prevention and fight against organised crime, despite continuous efforts, organised crime groups from these countries are still active in trafficking in illicit fire arms, property crime and trafficking of various illicit commodities (in particular drugs and tobacco), money laundering, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants and cybercrime in EU Member States. Efforts in this respect need to be strengthened¹³⁶.

Q4.1.6. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight the activities of facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.

In addition to the ongoing Frontex joint operations — Triton (hosted by Italy) and Poseidon Sea (hosted by Greece), to which the financial allocation has been tripled to enable reinforcing their surveillance and rescue capacity — the EU launched a Common Security and Defence Policy operation in the southern central Mediterranean on 22 June. This operation aims specifically at disrupting the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks¹³⁷. According to the Border Protection Division of the Aliens and Border Protection Branch of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, for a more effective management of the mixed migratory flows, a series of measures aiming at the strengthening the operational capacity of the Hellenic Police Departments to manage the increased migratory refugee pressure are undertaken, in a way that ensures the control of the legal entry of foreigners to the country, as well as their circulation/movement in the Schengen area, such as:

(a) Reinforcement of police and technical staff in the Evros and Eastern Aegean areas, with the aim of halting and tackling irregular immigration more effectively.

(b) Strengthening security controls across its external borders (land, sea, air) by carrying out thorough controls:

- National and European Databases (SIS II)
- Interpol database
- Travel documents
- Third-country nationals
- TEU nationals

(c) Collaboration with Frontex to strengthen our country's external border control activities. In particular, joint operations coordinated by the European Border and Coastguard Agency (Frontex), providing EU Member States with personnel and technical equipment, are being conducted.

(d) Europol's cooperation with the Hellenic Police was significantly strengthened in the area of better management of the migration phenomenon through the establishment of an Operational Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (June 2016). The active participation and cooperation of our country in the crucial area of the exchange of information, through the National Europol Office is also remarkable, while at the same time, in the same framework of cooperation, also provides INTERPOL with analysis and other information.

e) Intensifying passport-police checks at all airports in the country to identify cases of attempted use of forged documents by illegal migrants wishing to travel to other Member States.

(f) Cooperation with third countries and other EU Member States

Q4.1.7. If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to reduce the incidence of nationals found to be illegally present in your country? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples. Please also see Q4.4 (on overstayers) before answering to avoid overlap.

N/A

¹³⁶ European Commission (2017) Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, Brussels, 20.12.2017 COM(2017) 815 final https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/20171220_first_report_under_suspension_mechanism_en.pdf

¹³⁷ European Commission (2015) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Eighth biannual report on the functioning of the Schengen area, 1 May - 10 December 2015. COM(2015). 675 final. Strasbourg: European Commission http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2015/0675/COM_COM%282015%290675_EN.pdf

Q4.1.8. If applicable, what was the effectiveness of the measures listed above and which of them were most successful in reaching their intended goals? Please provide any good practices/lessons learned you have identified.

In 2017, the number of daily arrivals to Greek islands, as well as from Greece to other Member States declined¹³⁸. The same Commission's report also states that the mechanism for coordinated border controls at the internal borders, has provided the possibility to identify and remedy serious deficiencies in the management of the external borders in Greece, while the action plan and the monthly monitoring reports, submitted by the country at second phase, demonstrated that the measures taken by Greece have strengthened the security of Europe's external borders. The "regular" assessment of the management of the Greek external borders, carried out in 2016, confirmed the progress made by the Greek authorities in border protection¹³⁹.

Q4.2. Did your (Member) State implement measures to deal with administrative burdens since the introduction of the visa-free regime¹⁴⁰; If yes, please list and explain these measures, their impact/effectiveness and add any good practices/lessons learned you have identified.

The Hellenic state has put in place measures to tackle the administrative workload following the introduction of the visa liberalization. These measures concerned the strengthening of Greek police staff (officers) at border controls and equipment¹⁴¹. Furthermore, in response to this situation, the Commission introduced the "hotspot" approach, which provides a platform to allow the EU agencies to assist the frontline Member States in registering, screening and debriefing incoming migrants quickly, to help with the asylum procedures and to coordinate the return operations. Italy and Greece are the first two Member States where this approach is being implemented. The Commission has also sent its own personnel to both Member States to provide practical coordination and support. The Migration Management Support Teams active at the "hotspots" rely on the Member States' contributions via Frontex' and EASO's calls for experts and equipment in an appropriate way¹⁴².

Q4.3. Did your (Member) State implement measures to deal with the possible misuse of visa liberalisation¹⁴³; If yes, please list and explain these measures, their impact / effectiveness and add any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.

Pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 11 of Law 4251/2014, by a Joint Decision of the competent Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Labor, Social Security and Welfare "the suspension decision of third-country appeals on grounds of national interest, national economy or bilateral relations, mainly in cases when a third country does not cooperate in the field of return of its citizens is possible"¹⁴⁴. Also, the ban on changing the purpose of the residence permit under Article 7 par (4) of Law 4152/2014 is a measure to address the possible misuse of the visa liberalization.

Q4.4. How did your (Member) State deal with cases when third-country nationals entered the country legally, but did not legalize their stay after 90 days (overstayers)? Please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any measures implemented by your country to deal with this. If applicable, what was the impact/effectiveness of these measures and are there any good practices/lessons learned you have identified?

N/A

Q4.4.1. In the case of overstayers from the visa-free countries, does your (Member) State apply a different return procedure compared to the usual procedure? If yes, please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any good practices/lessons learned you have identified?

In Greece, no special procedure is applied¹⁴⁵.

¹³⁸ The number of irregular crossings averaged at 78 per day between 21 March 2016 and 17 September 2017.

¹³⁹ European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017-0570:FIN-EL-PDF>

¹⁴⁰ For example: significant increase of residence permit applications, increased demand for work permits, more time-consuming border control procedure due to the lack of visas. etc.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁴² European Commission (2015) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Eighth biannual report on the functioning of the Schengen area, 1 May - 10 December 2015. COM(2015). 675 final. Strasbourg: European Commission http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2015/0675/COM_COM%282015%290675_EN.pdf

¹⁴³ For example, dealing with cases when persons enter the country legally but later become illegally employed, are staying in the country legally, but are working without a work permit or apply for asylum without reasonable grounds.

¹⁴⁴ Liouis, N. and Gaitani, T. (2015) Handbook on the Application of the Immigration and Social Integration Code Cases, Conditions and Procedure for the Issuing of National Visas Special Schengen Visa Circumstances. Last Updated: 22.01.2015 Athens: Ministry of Foreign Affairs C4 Directorate of Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/ethnikes_theoriseis/2015/NationalVisasHandbook_aveccomments_2.doc

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q4.4.2. Does your (Member) State apply any special procedures in cases where overstayers have lost their identification documents or in instances where there are problems with their identification? If yes, please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any good practices/lessons learned you have identified?

It is possible to be extended. Law 4251/2014 in par. 5, regarding cases if someone remains/overstays at the country more than the provided time-period, significantly states: "The period of validity and/or the permitted duration of stay of an issued visa may be extended pursuant to Article 33 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 if the visa holder has sufficient means of subsistence and provides proof of force majeure or humanitarian reasons preventing him from leaving the territory of the Member States before the expiry of the period of validity of or the duration of stay authorised by the visa. This extension shall be granted by the competent authorities to the Ministry for Public Order and Citizen Protection. Extension of visas shall take the form of a visa sticker"¹⁴⁶.

Q4.4.3. If applicable, what was the effectiveness of these procedures (see Q4.4.1 and Q4.4.2) and were they successful in reaching their intended goals? Please provide any good practices/lessons learned you have identified.

N/A

Q4.5. How did your cooperation with the visa-free countries evolve over time in terms of assistance and information exchange, before and after the visa-free regime commencement¹⁴⁷? Please provide a short description and specific examples of your national situation disaggregated by region and third countries of interest.

Western Balkans - FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

N/A

Eastern Partnership - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:

N/A

Q4.5.1. If applicable, how effective was the cooperation with third countries to reach your desired goals? Where there any particular differences in your interactions with different third countries and did you identify any good practices/lessons learned?

Cross-border controls have been reinforced and became stricter¹⁴⁸.

Q4.6. If applicable, how did your (Member) State respond to the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? Please provide a short description of the measures taken and any good practices / lessons learned you have identified¹⁴⁹.

N/A

Q4.6.1. If applicable, were the measures of your (Member) State effective to manage the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? Please provide a short description of your national situation highlighting any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.

Cross-border controls have been reinforced and became stricter¹⁵⁰.

Q4.6.2. If applicable, how did your (Member) State cooperate with other (Member) States found in a similar situation (i.e. influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries)? Please provide a short description of your national situation and any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.

Cooperation with other states concerns the exchange of information through the VIS system and the Dublin national units, where information on asylum seekers is exchanged¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁶ https://www.mfa.gr/images/docs/ethnikes_theoriseis/2014/4251.pdf

¹⁴⁷ For example, in terms of information campaigns in the third countries working on the elimination of 'push factors' – unemployment, poverty, poor conditions in the national health system, assistance to visa-free countries from Member States and reintegration assistance to returnees.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁴⁹ For example, using the concept of safe country of origin.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Mrs. Trisevgeni Gaitani, Expert Advisor A', C4 Directorate for Justice, Home Affairs and Schengen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q4.6.3. Did you receive assistance from the EU to deal with the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? If yes, how effective was the assistance in supporting your (Member) State? Please provide a short description of your national situation and any good practices/lessons learned you have identified.

As part of the immediate action to assist frontline Member States which are facing disproportionate migratory pressures at the EU's external borders, the European Commission developed the hotspot approach. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the Police Cooperation Agency (Europol) and the Judicial Cooperation Agency (Eurojust) work on the ground with the authorities of the frontline Member State to help to fulfil their obligations under EU law and swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming irregular migrants. The hotspot approach also contributes to the implementation of the temporary relocation schemes. Italy and Greece are the two Member States where this hotspot approach is currently being implemented. Other Member States can also benefit from the hotspot approach upon request¹⁵².

Q4.7. What other measure (or good practice / lesson learned) was adopted by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable?

At the same time, are there any planned measures that will be adopted in the nearby future?¹⁵³;

Since the Schengen evaluation mechanism reform, the on-site teams observed in most cases overall compliance with the essential provisions of the Schengen legal framework. Nonetheless, several specific and some cross-cutting shortcomings were noticed in all policy fields, which needed to be remedied in order to ensure high uniform standards in the application of the Schengen acquis in practice and to maintain a high level of mutual trust between those Member States that form part of the area without border control at internal borders¹⁵⁴. The mechanism has led to substantial improvements in the implementation of the Schengen acquis in the Member States and has already proven its added value in ensuring the efficient functioning of the Schengen area: the coordinated introduction of border controls at selected internal border sections pursuant to Article 29 of the Schengen Borders Code was the result of the unannounced Schengen evaluation visit carried out in Greece at the end of 2015. This mechanism allowed to identify and to remedy swiftly serious deficiencies in the external border management in Greece, while the subsequent action plan and monthly follow-up reports submitted by Greece showed the actions taken by Greece to increase the security of Europe's external borders. The "regular" evaluation of the Greek external border management conducted in 2016 confirmed the progress made by the Greek authorities¹⁵⁵. The Schengen Evaluation has also led to concrete improvements in the implementation of the Schengen acquis in the evaluated Member States. Examples include: improvements to the implementation of the Schengen Information System, establishing national integrated border management strategies by the Member States, or increasing the staff levels at specific border crossing points to improve the management of the external border¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵² European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017:0570:FIN:EL:PDF>

¹⁵³ For example, in relation to Ukraine or Georgia for which the visa waiver agreement entered into force in 2017.

¹⁵⁴ European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017:0570:FIN:EL:PDF>

¹⁵⁵ European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017:0570:FIN:EL:PDF>

¹⁵⁶ European Commission (2017) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on preserving and strengthening Schengen, Brussels, 27.9.2017 COM(2017) 570 final. Brussels: European Commission <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2017:0570:FIN:EL:PDF>

SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS

National Contribution

The aim of this Section is to outline the main findings of the Study and present conclusions relevant for policymakers at national and EU level.

The synthesis report will aim to include infographics and visuals, therefore please take that into account when answering the questions by adding any innovative or visual presentations in your national reports that can carry through into the synthesis report. We also welcome any photos/images which are captioned, relevant and (data) protected with your national contribution. Please do not leave any answer box empty and insert N/A or NI as applicable.

Q5.1. With regard to the aims of this Study, what conclusions would you draw from the findings reached in elaborating your National Contribution?

Concerning the visa liberalization procedure, coordinating meetings of all competent bodies, such as the Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to regulate control at cross border entry areas; in order to ensure that after visa liberalization, asylum applications will not increase. However, with respect to the citizens of Georgia and Ukraine, only biometric passport holders can enter the country, without a visa. Migrants residing in Greece are increased, attempting to board on flights in the Schengen area with fake documents. Concerning specific nationalities in relation to the misuse of travel documents, no changes were witnessed regarding specific nationalities. Albanian nationals remained the most mentioned, despite the 11% drop, as nationality recorded in the third quarter of 2017, compared to the previous quarter. Syrian nationals are the second largest nationality in the third quarter of 2017, mainly due to their significant increase in the Schengen area. The detection of Ukrainian nationals fell by 17% in the third quarter of 2017, compared to the previous quarter. This trend is likely to continue as a result of the visa liberalization in force, since 11 June 2017. Iranian nationals have recorded a steady increase of 23% in the third quarter of 2017, compared to the previous quarter. Typically, there are cases of third-country nationals overstaying in the country their residence permit force, the so-called “overstayers”. The Border Protection Division of the Hellenic Police had to increase its staff (officers) and equipment at the borders for more effective controls. According to the Border Protection Division of the Foreigners and Border Protection Branch of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, in each case of visa liberalization for a particular nationality, the relevant Passport Control Services were immediately informed about the screening of persons in accordance with the provisions of the Schengen Borders Code (checking entry conditions). This Directorate is responsible for guiding the relevant Passport Control Services. These Services are, in any case, required to cope with the increasing trend of travel traffic.

The Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries continued to take measures to address the still persisting irregular migration challenges, in particular Albania. These measures are already yielding results. Cooperation on readmission continues smoothly for all Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership visa-free countries with overall high return rates.

Regarding Greece, border controls have been increased and strengthened, with cross-checking gates, with more Hellenic Police officers, etc.

As regards prevention and fight against organized crime, despite continuous efforts, organized crime groups from these countries are still active in trafficking in illicit fire arms, property crime and trafficking of various illicit commodities (in particular drugs and tobacco), money laundering, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants and cybercrime in EU Member States. Efforts in this respect need to be strengthened.

The efforts in this area need to be strengthened, apart from the ongoing Frontex joint operations — Triton (hosted by Italy) and Poseidon Sea (hosted by Greece), to which the financial allocation has been tripled to enable reinforcing their surveillance and rescue capacity — the EU launched a Common Security and Defense Policy operation in the southern central Mediterranean on 22 June. This operation aims specifically at disrupting the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks.

According to the Border Protection Division of the Foreigners and Border Protection Branch of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, for a more effective management of the mixed migratory flows, a series of measures aiming at the strengthening the operational capacity of the Hellenic Police Departments to manage the increased migratory/refugee pressure are undertaken, in a way that ensures the control of the legal entry of foreigners to the country, as well as their circulation/movement in the Schengen area, such as:

(a) Reinforcement of police and technical staff in the Evros and Eastern Aegean areas, with the aim of halting and tackling irregular immigration more effectively.

(b) Strengthening security controls across its external borders (land, sea, air) by carrying out thorough controls:

- National and European Databases (SIS II)
- Interpol database
- Travel documents
- Third-country nationals
- EU nationals

(c) Collaboration with Frontex to strengthen our country's external border control activities. In particular, joint operations coordinated by the European Border and Coastguard Agency (Frontex), providing EU Member States with personnel and technical equipment, are being conducted.

d) Europol's cooperation with the Hellenic Police was significantly strengthened in the area of better management of the migration phenomenon through the establishment of an Operational Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (June 2016). The active participation and cooperation of our country in the crucial area of the exchange of information, through the National Europol Office is also remarkable, while at the same time, in the same framework of cooperation, also provides INTERPOL with analysis and other information.

(e) Intensifying passport-police checks at all airports in the country to identify cases of attempted use of forged documents by illegal migrants wishing to travel to other Member States.

(f) Cooperation with third countries and other EU Member States.

The Hellenic state has put in place measures to tackle the administrative workload following the introduction of the visa liberalization. These measures concerned the strengthening of Greek police staff (officers) at border controls and equipment.

Q5.2. What do you consider to be the relevance of your findings to (national and/or EU level) policymakers?

The relevance of the findings of the Study of the European Migration Network for the year 2018 entitled "The Impact of Visa Liberalization on Countries of Destination" aims at informing Member States and the European Commission on all developments regarding the effects of visa liberalization on countries destination in Greece, focusing on the incoming populations from the countries: FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, are strictly harmonized at national level and EU level