

# MIGRANT KEY WORKERS AND SOCIAL COHESION IN EUROPE

A COMPARATIVE FIELD STUDY

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES</b> .....	5
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	7
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	8
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	12
1.1 Methodology .....	17
1.2 Rationale for case studies .....	18
1.3 Report outline .....	21
1.4 Background .....	22
<b>2. SOCIAL COHESION AND EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY</b> .....	25
2.1 Social cohesion: theory, policy and definition .....	25
2.2 Social cohesion and EU migrant integration policy .....	29
2.3 Social cohesion and national integration policies .....	30
<b>AGRICULTURE</b> .....	32
<b>3. ESSENTIAL BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR</b> .....	33
3.1 Introduction .....	34
3.2 Working conditions .....	48
3.3 Living conditions and social rights .....	57
3.4 Conclusion .....	62
<b>4. REMOTE AND VULNERABLE: AGRICULTURAL MIGRANT WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION</b> .....	63
4.1 Engagement with NGOs, trade unions and other civic organisations .....	67
4.2 Conclusion .....	73
<b>THE CARE SECTOR</b> .....	75
<b>5. INVALUABLE BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS</b> .....	76
5.1 Introduction .....	77
5.2 Background .....	77
5.3 Migrant workers' social rights .....	89
5.4 Living conditions .....	95

5.5 Working conditions .....	96
5.5.1 Working as a migrant care worker: dependence, precarity and invisibility .....	98
5.5.2 Blocked occupational mobility .....	103
5.6 Conclusion .....	105
<b>6. ISOLATED AND INVISIBLE: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION</b> .....	106
6.1 Barriers to social engagement .....	107
6.2 Active participation: Civil society organisations (CSOs) and trade unions .....	112
6.3 Conclusion .....	116
<b>THE IMPACT OF COVID-19</b> .....	117
<b>7. MIGRANT WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND CARE: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19</b> .....	118
7.1 Introduction .....	119
7.2 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants' health .....	119
7.3 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants in the agricultural sector .....	123
7.4 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants in the care sector .....	125
7.5 Public responses and activism .....	127
7.6 Conclusion .....	132
<b>8 CONCLUSION</b> .....	133
<b>9 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	136
9.1 EU-wide recommendations .....	137
9.2 Country-specific recommendations .....	141
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	150
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	175
Appendix 1: Abbreviations .....	176
Appendix 2: Key terms .....	177
Appendix 3: Interview sample .....	178
Appendix 4: Interview codes .....	179
Appendix 5: Topic guide .....	185
<b>AUTHORS, ABOUT FEPS &amp; PARTNERS</b> .....	188

# LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES

## BOXES

### Remote and vulnerable: agricultural migrant workers, participation and social cohesion

- Box 4:1: The Fair Mobility (“Faire Mobilität”) project (Germany)
- Box 4:2: The New Citizens Association for Interculturalism (ASNUCI) (Asociación Nuevos Ciudadanos por la Interculturalidad) shelter (Spain)
- Box 4:3: Gort Resource Centre (GRC), Gort (Ireland)
- Box 4:4: Mushroom Workers Support Group (Ireland)
- Box 4:5: Migrant Integration Centres (MICs) (Greece)

### Migrant care workers: invaluable but still exploited

- Box 5:1: Jeanneth Beltrán Observatory of Domestic and Care Workers’ Rights (Spain)
- Box 5:2: Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration Public Campaign: Plan de actuación de la inspección de Trabajo y seguridad social en el sector del hogar (Spain)
- Box 5:3: Company Z (Germany)

### Isolated and invisible: migrant care workers, participation and social cohesion

- Box 6:1: The care workers’ initiative (Germany)
- Box 6:2: Malen Etxea Association (Spain)
- Box 6:3: Charité Hospital in Berlin (Germany)
- Box 6:4: NGO for language instruction (Ireland)
- Box 6:5: Immigration Council Ireland (Ireland)
- Box 6:6: Collaboration between domestic worker associations and Spanish feminist CSOs (Spain)
- Box 6:7: The Workers’ Commissions (Comisiones Obreras) (CCOO) Recruitment of domestic workers (Spain)
- Box 6:8: SIPTU Fair Deal For Cleaners Campaign (Ireland)

### Migrant workers in agriculture and care: the impact of Covid-19

- Box 7:1: Introduction of special subsidy for domestic workers (Spain)
- Box 7:2: Introduction of special subsidy for individuals employing domestic workers (Spain)
- Box 7:3: FAU Union work with the Bornheim workers (Germany)
- Box 7:4: Migrant workers and SIPTU (Ireland)
- Box 7:5: Civic initiatives during the pandemic (Spain)

## FIGURES AND TABLES

### Essential but still exploited: migrant workers in the agricultural sector

- Figure 3:1: Origin of foreign seasonal workforce in Germany (estimates for 2016)
- Figure 3:2: Number of seasonal workers in each German federal state, 2021
- Figure 3:3: Scale of the agricultural sector in GDP and regional wage-earning employment, 2019 (Spain)
- Figure 3:4: Agricultural employment by nationality in Spain (2000-2021)
- Figure 3:5: The percentage of migrant workers in wage earning employment in agriculture (Spain) (2000-2021)
- Figure 3:6: Share of jobs held by migrant workers per autonomous communities, 2021, (Spain)
- Table 3:7: Migrant workers (by nationality) registered in the Special Agricultural Regime (Spain) (January 2021)
- Figure 3:8: Evolution of agricultural employment and agriculture's contribution to GDP, 1995–2019 (Greece)
- Figure 3:9: Migrant labour in agriculture by gender and wider regions, 2011 (Greece)
- Figure 3:10: Greek nationals & migrants employed in agriculture by occupational group, 2011
- Figure 3:11: Immigration, emigration and net migration for Ireland, (1997-2008)
- Figure 3:12: Immigration, emigration and net migration for Ireland, (2010-2020)
- Figure 3:13: Most common topics raised in labour rights counselling of seasonal workers in Lower Saxony, (Germany)
- Figure 3:14: Unemployment rates for Irish and non-Irish nationals Pre- and Post-financial Crisis (2004-2012)
- Figure 3:15: Contracts for the provision of agricultural workers in Spain, (2011-2019)

### Invaluable but still exploited: migrant care workers

- Figure 5:1: Registered domestic workers in Spain
- Figure 5:2: Types of care arrangements in Germany
- Figure 5:3: Migrant employees in the 'narrow care sector' by nationality, 2011 (Greece)
- Figure 5:4: Migrant employees in the domestic sector by nationality, 2011 (Greece)
- Figure 5:5: Posting contract model of employment for live-in migrant care workers in Germany
- Figure 5:6: Self-employment model of employment for live-in migrant care workers in Germany
- Figure 5:7: Employment hours of Greek nationals and migrants in the care and domestic cleaning sectors, 2011

### Migrant workers in agriculture and care: the impact of Covid-19

- Table 7:1: Profile of Covid-19 Cases by Ethnicity and Nationality in Ireland, 2020
- Figure 7:2: Number of sick certificates due to Covid-19 per 100,000 workers, occupational groups with highest and lowest absences (Germany)

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to recent demographic challenges, European countries are increasingly economically reliant on migrant labour, particularly in the care and agricultural sectors. Despite this reliance on migration, the conditions of employment in both sectors leave much to be desired. While countries become more diverse, and integration policies crucial, there is a disconnect between relatively successful integration for some migrants (over the timeframe of a generation) and the rise of racism and intolerance highlighting deep problems in the fabric of social relationships within European societies.

Exploitative and abusive working conditions solidify the social and economic exclusion of migrant workers. Long work days spent in remote and isolated workplaces undermine migrants' opportunities to form local social networks and participate in community initiatives. Low pay, exploitative employment, and non-existent alternatives perpetuate migrant workers' precariousness and prevent their long-term social mobility. All this takes place at the same time as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which has made clear to wide sections of the public how critical low-status migrant workers are to the functioning of key economic sectors and public infrastructures in EU countries, including the agriculture and care sectors.

The report brings together findings from four research teams on low status labour migration to explore how working and living conditions affect the social cohesion of migrants in the agriculture and care sectors of Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain. Thematic chapters provide the policy contexts researched through cross-country study of agricultural and care migration in Europe, national survey data, and semi-structured interviews with migrant workers, employers, NGOs, trade unions and local authorities. Interviews with migrants explored their experience of working/living conditions; access to services; knowledge of social rights and opportunities to form social networks and engage with community and civil society. Interviews with NGOs and trade unions addressed their work and engagement with migrant workers including insights into working and living conditions. Interviews with both categories of respondents also explored the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health, work and social engagement opportunities of migrant care workers, including how these were shaped by support from NGOs, trade unions, and public authorities.

Migrant workers are often treated as a single, monolithic category in public discussion, when, in reality, their vulnerabilities and working conditions vary greatly depending on characteristics such as gender, country of origin and legal status. The social and labour protections provided by EU countries to migrants from the EU/European Economic Area (EU/EEA migrants) are more extensive than those afforded to migrant workers who are third country nationals (TCNs). Migrants with irregular status, in particular, are not routinely allowed to work in EU countries and are not entitled to most social benefits. Host country-specific restrictions also apply to asylum-seekers. Differences in the rights and vulnerabilities associated with different migrant worker categories justify a differentiated analysis of their working and living conditions.

Notwithstanding their diversity, the case studies illustrate how migrants face similar problems in each of the countries even though their care and agricultural sectors differ. The comparative analysis allows investigation of the different influences on migrant opportunities to build diverse networks and participate in community life. These include the effects of austerity on public services, and, in each sector, the demand for migrant labour; working conditions; the relative share of EU versus non-EU migrants; existing legal protections and welfare access available to non-EU migrants and differences in the rights available to migrants in each legal category.

The four countries in the study are characterised by distinctive economies, agricultural and care sectors, labour migration policies and experiences of the pandemic. Spain has a strong agricultural sector but while there is state provision of care, home care is not treated as a formal economic sector. Historically, Greece has a sizeable agricultural labour force, modified to the needs of global markets and increasingly reliant on migrant labour. Ireland has recovered from the financial crisis, with higher growth rates than most other EU

countries. However, as a small island reliant on foreign direct investment and international financial flows, it is also the most exposed of the four countries to external shocks. Spain, with a much slower recovery from the financial crisis than Ireland, faces ongoing structural unemployment, relatively low wages, and a limited capacity to redistribute through taxation and public spending.

## **Summary of findings:**

### **1. Migrants in the agricultural and care sectors are excluded from society due to the following:**

- a) Problematic living conditions
  - Poor quality housing and overcrowding
  - Housing segregates migrant workers from their host society. In agriculture, it is often remotely situated, far from towns or other communities. Home care workers (especially live-in carers) experience psychological isolation
  - Housing, when provided by employers, creates a dependency trap
  - Isolation facilitates work abuses and perpetuates social exclusion.
- b) Exploitative and abusive employment conditions
  - Little say over official and unofficial terms of employment
  - Physically and psychologically strenuous work
  - Pay levels ranging from below to at statutory minimum wage levels
  - Illegal and semi-legal practices designed to force migrants to work harder and longer for lower pay
  - Weak bargaining positions vis-a-vis employers - facilitated by frequent dependence on employers
  - Lack of alternative forms of employment
  - Barriers to finding better-paid jobs include lack of language training, inability to take time off work or afford opportunities to upskill and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications.
- c) Weak legal protections and lack of social rights
  - Restrictive residency rights and work permit regulations present challenges to non-EU nationals.
  - Taking action against employers is a particularly risky undertaking, as it jeopardises not only migrant workers' employment, but also their work permits and housing.
  - Curtailed working rights and limited access to healthcare and social protection, including unemployment insurance, healthcare, protection from dismissal for those from EEA countries and those recruited as part of bilateral recruitment agreements.
  - Lack of awareness and/or misinformation about existing social and labour protections, which leaves them vulnerable to further exploitation by landlords and employers.

### **2. Integration and social cohesion policy on migrant workers is undermined by:**

- a) Disparities in their social rights and labour protections
  - Migrants who do not have legal status, new arriving migrants and those who do not have an adequate knowledge of the language may be treated as second class citizens whose principal

purpose is to feed agricultural and care employers' demands for cheap, expendable, labour

- Denying migrant workers basic social rights and protections perpetuates the power imbalance between them and employers, facilitates migrant workers' exploitation and overwork, and ultimately confines them to segmented labour markets
- Civic, economic and political forms of exclusion do not exist independently of each other - in most cases, they are mutually reinforcing.

b) Challenges to their social and civic participation

- Barriers include language difficulties, a lack of free time and fear that participating in civic action might jeopardise migrants' already precarious jobs and/or work permits
- Lack of engagement with civil society structures such as NGOs and trade unions deprives them of opportunities to build solidarity and mobilise organised assistance that could help improve working and living conditions
- NGOs and trade unions currently struggle to reach migrants in the agricultural and care sectors due to the remote and isolated work environments
- Informal and temporary migrant populations pose a challenge to trade unions.

**3. Civic organisations and workplace initiatives have a vital role in assisting migrant workers:**

a) Facilitating collective actions that successfully defend migrants workers' rights and improve their living and working conditions

b) Providing spaces and organised opportunities (e.g. social activities and cultural initiatives) for contact between migrant workers and host country populations

c) Providing language and cultural learning opportunities

d) Assisting with broader settlement challenges such as securing housing and addressing bureaucracy

e) Providing informal psycho-social support.

Migrant workers' active participation in the social, civic and political life of their communities is key to building solidarity and fostering more resilient and cohesive societies in Europe. This report identifies important connections between migrant workers' social and civic opportunities to participate and their broader living and working conditions in host countries. It demonstrates the potential of civic and trade union organisations to facilitate more active and participatory forms of migrant inclusion within host communities. Existing migrant integration policies in the EU focus on facilitating access to employment, training and education, and tackling discrimination and social exclusion. By contrast, the findings of this report highlight the need for policy measures that can promote more active forms of engagement between local populations and migrant workers in local communities, workplaces and civil society.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is an important feature of Europe's post-war experience. During the second half of the twentieth century, European countries have become major destinations for all types of migration flows - from labour migration and refugee movements to postcolonial and family migrations. Today, some 60 million citizens and residents of the EU live outside their country of birth, representing over 10% of the EU's total population. Labour migration, in particular, has played a critical role in Europe's post-war reconstruction and development.<sup>1</sup> The establishment and subsequent expansion of the EU single market since 1993 has significantly facilitated labour migration between EU countries, transforming European countries into more diverse societies. Today, migrant workers perform essential roles within European economies. In many countries, the functioning of critical sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, construction, and transport depend on migrant labour from within and outside the EU.<sup>2</sup> In 2019, migrant workers comprised 17.5% of all key workers in the cities of 26 European countries that are members of the OECD.<sup>3</sup>

Many in the EU are wary of immigrants and oblivious to their contribution to Europe's economic development and public services. A recent Eurobarometer survey found that 30% of people in the EU feel that the impact of immigration on their country is negative, and 40% do *not* believe that immigrants have a positive impact on their country's economy.<sup>4</sup> Migration has become one of the most divisive political issues across the EU. Economic austerity policies implemented in response to the global financial crisis of 2008, combined with the subsequent arrival in Europe of record numbers of asylum seekers from North Africa and the Middle East, have helped galvanise strong popular opposition to migration across the continent.<sup>5</sup>

Polarisation on migration in Europe underpins the recent resurgence of right-wing populist parties across Europe, and was also a key driver of Britain's popular vote to exit the EU in 2016.<sup>6</sup> The populist backlash against migration is symptomatic of deeper social cleavages that have undermined social cohesion within European societies for some time.<sup>7</sup> The 2008 financial crisis and subsequent austerity policies caused widespread economic hardship, and highlighted the growing economic and social inequalities that exist within European societies. The ensuing disillusionment with traditional democratic politics has accompanied growing resentment towards political and economic elites, helping invigorate more illiberal, nationalist and intolerant strands of politics in many EU member states.

In this environment of growing polarisation and eroding social cohesion, xenophobic depictions of migration as an economic and cultural threat have resonated with the broader economic and social anxieties felt by millions of European citizens. The result has been a rise in xenophobic attacks and discrimination in Europe

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1 Milena Tripkovic, Rainer Bauböck, and Rainer Münz, "The Integration of Migrants and Refugees: An EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography," in *The Integration of Migrants and Refugees: An EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography* (Florence: European University Institute, 2017), pp. 1-7.

2 Zane Rasnača, "Essential but Unprotected: Highly Mobile Workers in the EU during the Covid-19 Pandemic" (ETUI, The European Trade Union Institute, November 5, 2020), <https://www.etui.org/publications/essential-unprotected-highly-mobile-workers-eu-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

3 Rueschkamp, Lukas-Kleine, and Cem Özgüzel. "COVID-19 and Key Workers: The Role of Migrants across Regions and Cities." VOX/CEPR. <https://voxeu.org/article/covid-19-and-key-workers-role-migrants-across-regions-and-cities> (Accessed October 26, 2021). The figure cited for the share of migrants out of all key workers is 17.5% in Europe's cities and 7% in Europe's rural areas.

4 European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, "Integration of Immigrants in the European Union" (European Union, April 2018), Integration of immigrants in the European Union.

5 James Dennison and Lenka Dražanová, "Public Attitudes on Migration: Rethinking How People Perceive Migration An Analysis of Existing Opinion Polls in the Euro-Mediterranean Region" (Florence: European Union, 2018), [https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48432/file/Public0attitudes0on0migration\\_0rethinking0how0people0perceive0migration0EN.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48432/file/Public0attitudes0on0migration_0rethinking0how0people0perceive0migration0EN.pdf).

6 Christian Joppke, *Neoliberal Nationalism: Immigration and the Rise of the Populist Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

7 For a discussion and definition of social cohesion, see section, *Social Cohesion and European Migration Policy* in this report. A useful discussion of the relationships between social cohesion and migrant inclusion/integration policy is found in: International Organization for Migration (IOM), "World Migration Report 2020." (IOM, 2019) (Chapter 6), [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf).

and across the world, impacting on low-status migrant groups the most.<sup>8</sup>

Resentment and fear of migration is often shaped by perceptions of migration (as received from news media and political actors, for example) rather than by experiences of first-hand contact with migrants themselves.<sup>9</sup> Studies of European nationals conducted in several European countries have found that those who interact more frequently with migrants in their neighbourhoods, workplaces and classrooms hold more tolerant and positive attitudes towards migrants than those who have few or no such interactions.<sup>10</sup>

Despite decades of immigration in Europe and the entry of migrant workers into a wide range of essential occupations, a significant share of EU citizens has little to no contact with migrants in their daily lives. Over one-third (37 per cent) of EU citizens say they interact with non-EU migrants less than once a week. Exposure to migrants is particularly low in places where their contributions to host societies are most evident, such as workplaces and public services. Thus, 39 per cent of EU citizens say they interact with migrants less than once a year in the workplace, and 34 per cent report the same frequency of interaction in public service institutions (e.g. hospitals, public transport and local authorities).<sup>11</sup>

Migrants benefit from interaction with locals as it facilitates their integration.<sup>12</sup> Those who form more relationships enjoy better integration outcomes. They develop stronger cultural familiarity and identification with their host societies, enjoy better employment and educational outcomes, and benefit from improved political participation and representation.<sup>13</sup> However, their opportunities to interact and form relationships with locals are often curtailed by a lack of contact opportunities. Segregation, and, to a lesser extent, prejudice, can be important drivers of this trend.<sup>14</sup> Either way, current evidence from European studies suggests that migrants with low-status occupations and low educational attainment are generally the least likely to interact and form relationships with local populations.<sup>15</sup>

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8 Patrick Taran and Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA), "Crisis, Migration and Precarious Work: Impacts and Responses Focus on European Union Member Countries" (ITC-CTRAV European Trade Union Conference on Conversion of Precarious Work Into Work with Rights, February 21, 2012), <https://www.globalmigrationpolicy.org/articles/activities/Europe-%20Crisis%20&%20Migration%20Taran%20Final%2021-2-12.pdf>.

9 For an overview of evidence on the determinants of attitudes to migration, see James Dennison and Lenka Dražanová, "Public Attitudes on Migration: Rethinking How People Perceive Migration An Analysis of Existing Opinion Polls in the Euro-Mediterranean Region" (Florence: European Union, 2018), [https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48432/file/Public0attitudes0on0migration\\_0rethinking0how0people0perceive0migration0EN.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48432/file/Public0attitudes0on0migration_0rethinking0how0people0perceive0migration0EN.pdf).

10 See for example: Andrej Kokkonen, Peter Esaiasson, and Mikael Gilljam. "Diverse Workplaces and Interethnic Friendship Formation—A Multilevel Comparison across 21 OECD Countries." (Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 2015) 41, no. 2, pp. 284–305.; Helen Dempster, Amy Leach, and Karen Hargrave. "Public Attitudes towards Immigration and Immigrants: What People Think, Why, and How to Influence Them" (ODI Working Paper, 2020). [https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Public\\_attitudes\\_towards\\_immigration\\_and\\_immigrants\\_what\\_people\\_think\\_why\\_and\\_how.pdf](https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Public_attitudes_towards_immigration_and_immigrants_what_people_think_why_and_how.pdf); Jan Germen Janmaat. "Do Ethnically Mixed Classrooms Promote Inclusive Attitudes towards Immigrants Everywhere? A Study among Native Adolescents in 14 Countries." (European Sociological Review, 2014) 30, no. 6, pp. 810–22.; Miles Hewstone. "Consequences of Diversity for Social Cohesion and Prejudice: The Missing Dimension of Intergroup Contact." (Journal of Social Issues, 2015) 71, no. 2 : pp. 417–38.

11 European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, "Integration of Immigrants in the European Union" (European Union, April 2018), Integration of Immigrants in the European Union, pp. 25-26. Survey respondents were told that "Interaction" is defined as "anything from exchanging a few words to doing an activity together".

12 For a definition of integration, please see Appendix 2. Terms and definitions relating to migrants' inclusion and social cohesion here: International Organization for Migration, "WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2020" (International Organization for Migration, 2020), [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf).

13 For a review of cultural and socioeconomic effects of contact, see Drouhot, Lucas G, and Victor Nee. "Assimilation and the Second Generation in Europe and America: Blending and Segregating Social Dynamics Between Immigrants and Natives." *Annu. Rev. Sociol* 45 (2019): 177–99. Analyses of the political effects of contact can be found in Kindler, Marta, Vesselina Ratcheva, and Maria Piechowska. "Social Networks, Social Capital and Migrant Integration at Local Level: European Literature Review." Vol. 6. IRiA Working Paper Series, 2015; and also, Kokkonen, Andrej, and David Karlsson. "That's What Friends Are for: How intergroup friendships promote historically disadvantaged groups' substantive political representation" *British Journal of Sociology* 68, no. 4 (2017): 693–717.

14 See, Hewstone, Miles. "Consequences of Diversity for Social Cohesion and Prejudice: The Missing Dimension of Intergroup Contact." *Journal of Social Issues* 71, no. 2 (2015): 417–38.; and Semyonov, Moshe, and Anya Glikman. "Ethnic Residential Segregation, Social Contacts, and Anti-Minority Attitudes in European Societies." *European Sociological Review* 25, no. 6 (2009): 693–708.

15 Available studies on migrants' social contacts examine European countries independently. See Fokkema Tineke, and Hein de Haas. "Pre- and Post-Migration Determinants of Socio-Cultural Integration of African Immigrants in Italy and Spain." *International Migration* 53, no. 6 (2011): 3–26.; Kooops, Judith, Borja Martinovic, and Jeroen Weesie. "Are Inter-Minority Contacts Guided by the Same Mechanisms as Minority–Majority Contacts? A Comparative Study of Two Types of Inter-Ethnic Ties in the Netherlands."

Overcoming current divisions surrounding migration will require integration policies that can help foster positive reciprocal engagements between migrants and European host populations, as advocated in objective 16 of the Global Compact for Migration.<sup>16</sup> Migrant integration policies in the EU largely focus on improving migrants' economic and educational outcomes while combating anti-migrant prejudice and discrimination. Missing, however, are policies facilitating migrants' proactive social, civic and political participation in their host societies. The goal of which should be to promote solidarity and social cohesion in migrants' host communities by enabling them to participate in, and actively contribute to, the social and civic life of their communities, on par with local populations.

This report examines the challenges and opportunities that migrants working in the care and agricultural sectors<sup>17</sup> encounter to participate in the social, civic, and political life of four EU member states: Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain. It analyses their social rights and working and living conditions in the two sectors. It then explores their opportunities to form social networks and partake in work and community-based civic and political activities.

Over the past few decades, the agriculture and care sectors of many EU countries have become reliant on migrant workers. Migrants from both EU and non-EU countries have become a critical source of cheap agricultural and care labour. For agricultural employers, access to migrant workers is crucial given the declining share of local workforces willing to accept the low pay and challenging working conditions in this sector. Between 2011 and 2017, the number of local agricultural workers in EU countries decreased by 1.3 million (13 per cent), while the combined number of EU and non-EU migrant workers rose by 142,000 (33 per cent).<sup>18</sup> By 2019, 6.2 per cent of all registered agricultural workers in the EU were migrants - 3.7 per cent were non-EU citizens, while 2.5 per cent were intra-EU migrants.<sup>19</sup>

The entry of migrant workers into the care sector reflects the ongoing growth in demand for care services across the EU. This has been driven by the continued ageing of Europe's population, retrenchments in state-provided long-term care services, and transformations in European countries' traditional family structures.<sup>20</sup> Previously, women had been the traditional care providers in most households across Europe. Their entry into the labour market combined with the increased geographical dispersion of European families has created a growing market for paid care work. Migrant care workers have stepped into this gap in growing numbers. In 2018, the share of foreign-born workers in the EU 'personal care' workforce was estimated to be just over 18 per cent. Most of those workers (13 per cent) were born outside the EU. Foreign-born employees also accounted for 10 per cent of the EU's health associate professionals, which include pharmaceutical technicians, midwives and nurses.<sup>21</sup>

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International Migration Review 51, no. 3 (2017): 701–26.; Schlueter, Elmar. "The Inter-Ethnic Friendships of Immigrants with Host-Society Members: Revisiting the Role of Ethnic Residential Segregation." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 77–91.

16 United Nations General Assembly, "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration", A/CONF.231/3, (United Nations Organization, 30 July 2018), [https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/2010Strategy\\_ActionPlan\\_SocialCohesion.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/2010Strategy_ActionPlan_SocialCohesion.pdf).

17 Please note that the report uses the generic term 'agriculture' but also discusses research on migrant workers in the agrifood sector, which includes agriculture, horticulture and food and drink processing technologies.

18 Fabrizio Natale et al., "Migration in EU Rural Areas" (Publications Office of the European Union, June 19, 2019), <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC116919>.

19 EuroStat, "People on the Move: Employment of Non-Nationals by Sector," Labour Force Survey extraction: Employment of non-nationals by sector (European Union, 2019), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digipub/eumove/vis/eumove\\_02\\_02\\_02/index.html?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digipub/eumove/vis/eumove_02_02_02/index.html?lang=en).

20 Anna Triandafyllidou, "A Sectorial Approach to Labour Migration: Agriculture and Domestic Work", in McAuliffe, M. and M. Klein Solomon, *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (International Organization for Migration, 2017), [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/agriculture\\_and\\_domestic\\_work.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/agriculture_and_domestic_work.pdf).

21 Francesco Fansani and Jacopo Mazza, "Immigrant Key Workers: Their Contribution to Europe's COVID-19 Response" (European Commission, April 24, 2020), [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/immigrant-key-workers-their-contribution-europes-covid-19-response\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/immigrant-key-workers-their-contribution-europes-covid-19-response_en). Note that the authors define migrant workers as anyone born outside the country of employment, irrespective of his or her citizenship status. Their 'Personal care worker' category includes personal care workers, child care workers and teachers' aides, and personal care workers in health services.

Migrant workers' critical role in Europe's agricultural and care sectors was highlighted during the recent Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>22,23</sup> During which, migrant nurses and healthcare assistants have been crucial to the capacity of national healthcare systems in the EU to cope with unprecedented volumes of patients. Their critical contribution to the EU's agricultural and care systems was also highlighted by the disruptions in food production and long-term care provision that took place when member states first started closing their borders during the pandemic's early phases. With borders closed, farmers and households faced difficulties recruiting migrants to perform essential agricultural labour and care work.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, in March 2020, the European Commission recognised migrants employed in these sectors as 'critical' whose movement across EU borders should be enabled by member states.<sup>25</sup>

Notwithstanding their significant contributions to critical economic sectors and public services, most migrants employed in the agricultural and care professions are considered 'low-skill' and 'low status'. As such, they are likely to experience challenging and unfavourable working conditions. Recent studies conducted in different EU countries during the pandemic suggest that migrant workers in both sectors have been particularly vulnerable to job losses, pay cuts, curtailment of working rights and poor working conditions.<sup>26</sup> The present report explores the implications of migrants' working and living conditions for their integration and broader social participation opportunities.

Migrants employed in agriculture and care come from diverse backgrounds. The challenging conditions characterising agricultural and care employment have helped transform these occupations into important labour market niches for third country migrants in the EU. According to 2020 EU data on migration, non-EU citizens are over-represented within both agricultural and care-related occupations: 2.6 per cent of non-EU workers in the EU labour force are employed as 'agriculture and fisheries' workers, compared to 0.6 per cent of EU nationals. Similarly, while 5.6 per cent of non-EU workers are employed as 'personal care' workers, this only applies to 2.9 per cent of EU workers.<sup>27</sup> These figures almost certainly underestimate the actual share of non-EU citizens in these occupations given the large share of undeclared work in the broader agricultural and care sectors. Though precise numbers are unavailable, it is estimated that approximately one-third of the EU's agricultural workforce and one fifth of its domestic household workforce consist of undeclared workers.<sup>28</sup> This report explores how differences in migrant workers' origins and legal statuses shape their working and living experiences in host countries.

The reliance of EU countries on migrants to perform essential agricultural and care work is only likely to increase in future.<sup>29</sup> Migrant workers are unlikely to be replaced by technology, and the continued growth and

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22 From now on referred to as 'the pandemic.'

23 See for example: "Coronavirus: Protecting Seasonal Workers," (European Commission, July 16, 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1342](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1342).

24 Kate Hooper and Camille Le Coz, "A Race Against the Clock: Meeting Seasonal Labor Needs in the Age of Covid-19," migrationpolicy.org (Migration Policy Institute, September 24, 2020), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/meeting-seasonal-labor-needs-age-covid-19>.

25 Eur-Lex, "Communication from the Commission Guidelines Concerning the Exercise of the Free Movement of Workers during COVID-19 Outbreak 2020/C 102 I/03" (European Union, March 3, 2020), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020XC0330%2803%29>. See also, Zane Rasnača, "Essential but Unprotected: Highly Mobile Workers in the EU during the Covid-19 Pandemic" (ETUI, The European Trade Union Institute, November 5, 2020), <https://www.etui.org/publications/essential-unprotected-highly-mobile-workers-eu-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

26 For example: Zane Rasnača, "Essential but Unprotected: Highly Mobile Workers in the EU during the Covid-19 Pandemic" (ETUI Policy Brief, 2020), <https://www.etui.org/publications/essential-unprotected-highly-mobile-workers-eu-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

27 European Commission, "Statistics on Migration to Europe" European Commission - European Commission (European Union, September 29, 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe\\_en#employment-of-immigrants](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en#employment-of-immigrants). The statistic essentially treats the EU bloc as one big country and compares what percentage of TCNs Vs EU-nationals are employed in each occupational category.

28 Colin Williams and Adrian Horodnic, "Tackling Undeclared Work in the Agricultural Sector", European Platform Undeclared Work (2018). "Tackling Undeclared Work in the Agricultural Sector: A Learning Resource", European Platform Undeclared Work, Brussels.; Colin Williams (2019) and Piet Renooy. (Eurofound, 2008).

29 Terence Hogarth, "Covid-19 and the Demand for Labour and Skills in Europe Early Evidence and Implications for Migration Policy" (Migration Policy Institute, February 2021), [https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpie-hogarth\\_covid19-labour-final.pdf](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpie-hogarth_covid19-labour-final.pdf).



ageing of European populations means demand for agricultural products and care services will continue to grow. With the continued decline in local workforce participation in EU countries' agricultural sectors, more migrants will be needed to fill labour gaps. Between 2005 and 2020, agricultural employment (both salaried and unsalaried) across the EU declined by an average yearly rate of 2.5 per cent. This decline was significantly driven by shifts away from agricultural occupations by countries' local labour forces.<sup>30</sup> Demand for migrant care workers will also keep rising, given the ongoing growth of the EU's population aged 65 and over.<sup>31</sup> Future labour requirements in agriculture and care will therefore require policymakers to develop informed, effective and socially cohesive integration policies for the growing numbers of migrants that will be employed in these sectors.

## 1.1 Methodology

The report reviews existing academic and policy literature on the agricultural and care sectors of Greece, Germany, Ireland and Spain, focusing on the social and economic challenges faced by migrants employed in these sectors. Census and EU data and country-specific databases are analysed. This provides the wider national historical and economic contexts to the growing presence of migrants in each of these countries' care and agricultural sectors.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers, NGO representatives, trade unions and/or local authority officials who work with migrants employed in the care and agricultural sectors in each case study country (see appendices for details of country-specific interview samples and the interview topic guide). Migrant workers were also interviewed directly. Some interviews were conducted before and others during the pandemic. The latter interviews included questions about the effects of the pandemic.

Interviews with migrants provided insight into the daily challenges faced by migrants in and out of the workplace, highlighting how administrative obstacles and exploitative practices in the workplace affect their patterns of social and civic participation. Interviews conducted with employers and other organisational representatives gave further context and grounded the report's broader findings in migrant workers' actual lived experiences.

Interview respondents were recruited into each country's sample on the basis of their familiarity with key aspects of migrant workers' working and living conditions in the agricultural and care sectors. Respondents were informed in advance that any identifying information would only be handled by the research team, stored securely and used solely for the purposes of this study. They were also informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Migrant workers' identifying information was only recorded with their consent.

At the beginning of this project, roundtable events with researchers and members from relevant civil society organisations, trade unions and policymakers broadly identified the topics to be used in interview schedules. These included the impacts of changing EU and national policies within care/agricultural sectors; migrants' working conditions, knowledge of rights and access to support for protecting those rights; social isolation, engagement in civil society, and inclusion by NGOs and trade unions; changes to working conditions and social engagement opportunities during the pandemic. The interviews highlighted initiatives promoting migrants' social, civic and political participation in host countries.

While the interview material gathered in the four countries provides insight into the working and living conditions of migrant workers, certain methodological limitations were unavoidable. The report only

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30 EuroStat, "Performance of the Agricultural Sector- Statistics Explained," Performance of the agricultural sector - Statistics Explained, (Eurostat, March 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Performance\\_of\\_the\\_agricultural\\_sector#Resource\\_performance\\_of\\_the\\_agricultural\\_sector](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Performance_of_the_agricultural_sector#Resource_performance_of_the_agricultural_sector).

31 The EU's population aged 65 and over increased by approximately 60 per cent between 1985 and 2015. See, Gilles Spielvogel and Michela Meghnagi, "Assessing the Role of Migration in European Labour Force Growth by 2030" (OECD, 2018), <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/wp204.pdf>.

examines the conditions of migrant workers in four countries in Europe. Its findings may therefore have only partial relevance in European countries with very different migration regimes and agricultural/care sectors. Moreover, due to pandemic-related access restrictions, a relatively large share of respondents in each country represented civil society organisations and trade unions, whereas employers and migrant workers themselves (particularly agricultural migrant workers) comprised only a minority of the sample.

In addition, migrants were recruited using snowball sampling, with a focus on the experiences of migrant workers in the most vulnerable social categories (for example, irregularly employed migrant workers). Consequently, the findings do not represent the full range of migrant experiences in the agricultural and care sectors of the countries studied. Specifically, the challenges and opportunities faced by permanently resident migrant workers in stable occupational positions within these sectors are less explored. Finally, due to the time frame for the study, only the effects of the first wave of the pandemic could be taken into account in this report.

Desk research conducted for this report was in some places limited by the lack of official quantitative migration data. For example, seasonal work remains mostly unrecorded in both national and European statistics. EUROSTAT data on seasonal migration only encompass TCNs, and therefore countries such as Germany, that rely almost exclusively on EU internal migrants, do not appear in the statistics. Two further examples include the lack of reliable estimates of irregular and undeclared work in the care and agriculture sectors of the four countries studied, and the imperfect overlap between national surveys' occupational category classifications and the migrant care worker populations examined in this report. Where possible, the report provides estimates based on approximations by official authorities or NGOs active in the field.

## 1.2 Rationale for case studies

The choice of countries for the report is based on distinctive migration and demographic trends as well as different labour market needs for the agriculture and care sectors. For example, migrants in Spain who work in either sector generally come from Spanish-speaking South and central American countries or neighbouring countries such as Morocco. In contrast, migrants to Germany and Ireland employed in these sectors come predominantly from Eastern Europe, where migration patterns have emerged over time because of labour demand, social connections and familiarity. Similarities in working conditions and engagement in social and civic life across national contexts, suggest 1) the potential impact of EU-level policy on both worker rights and social cohesion and 2) the limitations of existing integration policy, both as a concept applied to migrant experience in destination countries and in terms of measures for facilitating migrant settlement.

The demand for migrant workers and the types of work performed by migrants depends on the size and nature of the sectors. For instance, Spain is the largest agricultural exporter in the EU and includes sizeable horticulture and beef/dairy industries. Spain,<sup>32</sup> Germany, and Ireland are among the largest beef exporters in the EU and Germany and Ireland are major milk exporters. Spain produces the most fruit and vegetables in the EU, and Greece is typically amongst the top five producers for fruit and Germany, vegetables. Ireland is typically far down the list of European producers for both.<sup>33</sup>

The need for migrant workers has expectedly affected the timing and scale of in-migration over the past fifty years. Greece and Spain, along with other Mediterranean countries located on the southern borders of Europe, receive large amounts of immigrants in search of better life chances and higher economic returns for

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32 Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, "Beef accounts for 6 per cent of agrarian production structure in Spain, after fruits (19 per cent) vegetables (18 per cent) and pork (14 per cent)" (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 2018), [https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/estadistica/temas/estadisticas-agrarias/cea\\_2020\\_2\\_estimacion\\_enero\\_2021\\_tcm30-557244.xlsx](https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/estadistica/temas/estadisticas-agrarias/cea_2020_2_estimacion_enero_2021_tcm30-557244.xlsx).

33 European Statistics Handbook, "Fruit Logistica Inc: A collection of key production, import and export information, market trends and patterns of trade for Europe's fresh fruit and vegetable business". (European Statistics Handbook, 2020), [https://www.fruitlogistica.com/FRUIT-LOGISTICA/Downloads-Alle-Sprachen/Auf-einen-Blick/European\\_Statistics\\_Handbook\\_2020.pdf](https://www.fruitlogistica.com/FRUIT-LOGISTICA/Downloads-Alle-Sprachen/Auf-einen-Blick/European_Statistics_Handbook_2020.pdf).

their employment. Compared to earlier immigration waves to both countries, contemporary flows are more diverse in terms of migrants' nationalities, gender and educational levels. Another feature of migration to both countries is the high proportion of irregular migrants among the newly arrived.<sup>34</sup> While previously serving as transit routes and later as 'waiting rooms' for migrants en route to Northern Europe, Greece and Spain have since become desirable migration destinations in their own right.<sup>35</sup> Greece specifically is the Southern European country most sought after by refugees (through the Greek - Turkish borders).<sup>36</sup>

Greece has transitioned from a country of net emigration to net immigration over the past three decades. In the 1991 census, 1.6 per cent of its population were migrants.<sup>37</sup> By 1994, an estimated 350,000 migrants were living in the country, of which 50 per cent came from Albania.<sup>38</sup> From the early 2000s, migrants from Africa and Asia began to increase. In the 2011 census, its migrant population was 912,000 - 8.4 per cent of population - with 53 per cent Albanians, 8.3 per cent Bulgarians, 5.1 per cent Romanians, 3.7 per cent Pakistanis, 3 per cent Georgians, 1.6 per cent Polish, 1.2 per cent Indians and 1.2 per cent Bangladeshis. In general, there are more Albanian and EU female migrants and more male African and Asian migrants.<sup>39</sup>

Albanian migrants in Greece are commonly employed in construction and agriculture. Asian migrants, such as Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, tend to be found in the most precarious jobs in manufacturing/processing in agriculture, while women from eastern European countries are commonly employed in cleaning and personal care services, as well as tourism.

In Germany, people with a migrant background - comprising any person with at least one parent not born with German citizenship - number more than 21.2 million, or 26 per cent of the population.<sup>40</sup> 10.1 million (12.4 per cent) of those with a migrant background do not have German citizenship and 11.1 million (13.6 per cent) do. 35.2 per cent come from EU-27 countries and 29.7 per cent from other non-EU European countries.<sup>41</sup> Migrants comprise a highly heterogeneous group (people with or without direct migration experience, second generation migrants born in Germany and people with and without German citizenship). They predominantly work in industries such as transport, logistics, security or cleaning in which precarious contractual relationships are widespread.<sup>42</sup> People with a "migration background" and refugees are more likely on average to work in jobs critical ("systemrelevant") to German infrastructure: 60 per cent of refugees and 54 per cent of those with a "migration background."<sup>43</sup>

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34 Russell King, Gabriella Lazaridis, and Charalampos G. Tsardanidēs. *Eldorado or Fortress?: Migration in Southern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 12.

35 International Rescue Committee, "Greece Crisis briefing" (International Rescue Committee, 2020), <https://www.rescue-uk.org/country/greece>.

36 Jennifer Cavounidis, "Migration in Southern Europe and the Case of Greece." *International Migration* 40, no. 1 (2002): 45–70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00185>; João Peixoto, Joaquín Arango, Corrado Bonifazi, Claudia Finotelli, Catarina Sabino, Salvatore Strozza, and Anna Triandafyllidou. "Immigrants, Markets and Policies in Southern Europe: The Making of an Immigration Model?" *European Immigrations*, (2012) 107–48, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048517275.006>.

37 169,500 based on the census; but the Ministry of Public Order (MoPO) estimated that the actual number when including undocumented was 253,000 - with Albanians making up 12.2 per cent and EU-15 nationals making up one-fifth (21.2 per cent), see, Rossetos Fakiolas, "Socio-Economic Effects of Immigration in Greece." *Journal of European Social Policy* 9, no. 3 (1999): 211–29.

38 Most of the Albanian migrant population arrived between 1990-95, with a further big wave in 1996 (due to the collapse of 'pyramid schemes' in Albania). Theodore P. Lianos, Alexander H. Sarris, Louka T. Katseli, "Illegal immigration and local labour markets: the case of northern Greece". *International Migration*, 34 no.3 (1996) 449-484, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1996.tb00537>.

39 Hellenic Statistical Authority, "Population Census" (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011), <https://www.statistics.gr/en/2011-census-pop-hous>.

40 BPB, "Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung", (BPB, 2020), <https://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61646/migrationshintergrund-i>.

41 Top countries of origin: Turkey (13.3 per cent), Poland (10.5 per cent), Russia (6.5 per cent), Romania and Italy (4.8 per cent and 4.1 per cent). Top countries of origin outside Europe: Kazakhstan (5.9 per cent) and Syria (4 per cent) (ibid).

42 Aleksandra Lewicki, "Sind Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund stärker von Covid-19 betroffen? (Are people with a migration background more affected by Covid-19?)" (Mediendienst Integration, June 2020), [https://mediendienst-integration.de/fileadmin/Dateien/MEDIENDIENST\\_Expertise\\_Covid-19\\_und\\_Migrationshintergrund.pdf](https://mediendienst-integration.de/fileadmin/Dateien/MEDIENDIENST_Expertise_Covid-19_und_Migrationshintergrund.pdf).

43 Herbert Brücker, Lidwina Gundacker, Andreas Hauptmann, Philipp Jaschke, "Die Arbeitsmarktwirkungen der Covid-19 Pandemie auf Geflüchtete and andere Migrantinnen und Migranten" (The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the labour market for refugees and other migrants). Nürnberg: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung, 2021. <http://doku.iab.de/forschungsbericht/2021/>

Spain's experience of migration has been influenced by labour shortages in sectors such as agriculture, increasing labour force participation by women, and the unwillingness of 'indigenous' workers to take on low paid work in agriculture and care. Migrant workers were required by immigrant legislation to participate in sectors of the labour market with national shortages. In the years in which contingent-regularisation was called for (1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, and 1999), 80 per cent of permits for farming and domestic labour, diverted migrant workers to labour niches characterised by precariousness, low salaries, and low social value, especially in the case of domestic workers. The number of immigrants increased by more than two million between 1998 and 2008. Close to half were women, mainly from Latin American countries.<sup>44</sup>

With increased immigration and the social devaluation of precarious and poorly paid jobs in Spain, where demand is steady but not covered by Spanish women, sectors such as domestic work have been turned into an "immigrant woman's activity." Migrant women in this sector do not generally achieve upward mobility to other, less precarious occupations, as there are many more employment opportunities in domestic work than in any other area.<sup>45</sup>

Ireland has experienced the most recent transformation in migration patterns. Historically characterised as a country of out-migration, Ireland has become, since the Celtic Tiger surge in the nineties, a growing destination for migrants. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and the development of IT and other sectors attracted high skilled migrant workers in particular. Historically, it has experienced several significant waves of emigration. Almost 15 per cent of its population left in the 1950s, sometimes to the low paid jobs in agriculture examined in this report. Another wave left in the 1980s, but in the 1990s and the financial crisis, immigration to Ireland rose dramatically. With the global financial crisis, however, the number of emigrants from Ireland tripled between 2008 and 2012.<sup>46</sup>

Central Statistics Office (CSO) data show a jump in non-EU/UK migration to Ireland from 19,000 in 2014 to 30,400 in 2020. In 2016, the leading occupation for migrants with little or no English language skills was cleaning. However, a relatively high percentage (7.1 per cent versus 9.3 per cent in restaurants and 8.3 per cent in building services) of migrant workers with basic English language skills were employed in meat processing,<sup>47</sup> agricultural, residential care and social work.

The highest number of migrants to Ireland are from Eastern Europe (Latvia, Romania, Poland, Lithuania), as well as India, the US, Brazil, and Western European countries like Germany, France, and Spain.<sup>48</sup> There is very little specific data about occupation. Census data from 2016 reveals that comparatively more non-Irish employees were working in non-manual, manual skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled work than Irish nationals (46.9 per cent versus 39.2 per cent).<sup>49</sup> Non-Irish workers in agriculture tended to be Slovak, Latvian, Polish,

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[fb0521.pdf](#).

44 Based on analysis of census figures available at: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, "Población Extranjera Por Nacionalidad, Comunidades, Sexo y Año (Foreign Population by Nationality, Communities, Sex and Year)." (INE. Instituto Nacional de Estadística., 1998), <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=%2Ft20%2Fe245%2Fp08%2Ff10%2F&file=02005.px>.

45 Consejo Económico Y Social España Departamento De Publicaciones (Economic And Social Council Spain Publications Department), "El Sistema De Promoción De La Autonomía Personal Y Atención A Las Personas En Situación De Dependencia (The System Of Promotion Of Personal Autonomy And Attention To People In A Situation Of Dependence)" (2020), <http://www.ces.es/documents/10180/5226728/inf0320.pdf/f01ebb9a-c9a2-e62a-ad6b-61a39a844fe4>.

46 Irial Glynn with Tomás Kelly and Piaras Mac Éinrí, "The Re-Emergence of Emigration from Ireland New Trends in an Old Story", (Transatlantic council on Migration, 2015), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TCM-Emigration-Ireland-FINAL.pdf>.

47 Central Statistics Office (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh) (CSO). "Census of Population - Profile 11 Employment, Occupations, and Industry." Census of Population - Profile 11 Employment, Occupations, and Industry. (CSO, 2016), <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp11eoi/cp11eoi/lfnmfl/>.

48 Central Statistics Office (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh) (CSO). "Census of Population - Profile 11 Employment, Occupations, and Industry." Census of Population - Profile 11 Employment, Occupations, and Industry. (CSO, 2016), <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp11eoi/cp11eoi/lfnmfl/>.

49 Central Statistics Office (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh) (CSO). "Socio-Economic Aspects, Census of Population: Profile 7 Migration and Diversity." Socio-economic aspects, Census of Population: Profile 7 Migration and Diversity. (CSO, 2016), <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp7md/p7md/p7sea/>.

Hungarian, Lithuanian, Romanian, and Brazilian.

### 1.3 Report outline

The report compares efforts at building social cohesion and social solidarity in four EU countries with distinctive experiences of migration – Germany, Greece, Ireland, and Spain. The research focuses on low paid migrant workers in the agricultural and care sectors. These important sectors depend on migrant workers but are often characterised by exploitative working conditions and reliance on irregular (including undocumented) migrant labour. Analysis of these sectors is also critical to policy on demographic trends, the impact of climate change and trade agreements, reinforcement of human rights, and infrastructure. In addition, the pandemic highlighted their significance for the wellbeing of older people and for food supply, as well as the risks that low paid employees may have to take to protect public access to services and food consumption.

The report begins by introducing and defining social cohesion as a concept, highlighting its relevance to policymaking on integration. It then divides into two. The first chapter 'Essential but still exploited: migrant workers in the agricultural sector' provides the policy context for migrant workers in the agricultural sector of the four countries, followed by a discussion of their social rights, living and working conditions. It looks at how these factors vary across migrant categories (for example, EU/EEA migrants versus TCNs) and industries within the sector.

'Remote and vulnerable: Agricultural migrant workers, participation and social cohesion' focuses on migrant workers' social networks and civic participation patterns - including migrant workers' capacity to engage with migrant associations, NGOs and trade unions that might help them defend their social rights and improve their working and living conditions. The focus is on the inclusion of migrant workers within broader institutional structures that defend their rights, provide them with a collective voice, and build cross-group solidarity. These forms of social inclusion are more directly reflective of social cohesion. The findings in this section relate to the preceding discussion on migrants' social inclusion and their working and living conditions. Examples are provided of local initiatives that promote migrant workers' social and civic inclusion in the four countries examined.

'Invaluable but still exploited: migrant care workers' and 'Isolated and invisible: migrant care workers, participation and social cohesion' explore the social rights and working and living conditions of migrant care workers and analyse their social inclusion patterns and opportunities.

The final chapter 'The impact of Covid-19' discusses the effect of the pandemic on the lives of migrant workers in the agricultural and care sectors including on their social rights, living and working conditions and implications for their social networks and civic participation opportunities. The discussion also showcases initiatives that have successfully helped migrant workers as they faced new and unprecedented challenges during the crisis.

The report reflects on the relationship between migrant integration and social cohesion in countries that are home to growing numbers of low-status migrant workers. A case is made for prioritising investment in civil society organisations that reach out to migrants and 'indigenous' citizens to engage collectively in local activities - to ensure that migrant integration and social cohesion can go hand in hand. Consistent with this vision, the report concludes with policy recommendations designed to help EU countries harmonise the goal of migrant integration with social cohesion. The recommendations target EU and national policymakers, trade union officials and NGOs.

## 1.4 Background

The EU has promoted integration policies for migrants over the past several decades. Though its statements have acknowledged that integration policymaking is the prerogative of EU member states' legislative and governmental authorities, the EU has also declared that "it is clearly in the common interest of all Member States of the Union that each individual Member State pursues effective integration strategies."<sup>50</sup> The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, originally intended to guide national policy, refer to employment and educational opportunities, respect for European values, knowledge of the national language and history, access to public and private services without discrimination, and mainstreaming integration within policy as well as effective evaluation mechanisms. EU common principles also include reference to host country responsibility, namely that integration is a 'two-way process', and stress the importance of "frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens" and that the "participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration." The interaction between immigrants and citizens can take place in "[s]hared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures."<sup>51</sup>

With this policy context in mind, does integration represent an effective and accurate conceptual reference for enabling migrants, especially those from outside the EU and in low-paid, insecure work, to lead fulfilling lives in host countries? And to benefit from the intercultural exchange initiatives and volunteering programmes advocated in EU integration policy guidelines? The new EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion<sup>52</sup> (2021-2027) promotes better access to: education and training from early childhood to adulthood, health services, and housing, referring, in particular, to non-discrimination and segregation. It also acknowledges that improving employment opportunities and recognition of existing skills amongst migrants will generate more respect for their contribution and ensure that they are supported to reach their full potential.<sup>53</sup> However, it does not incorporate the social dimension of migrant workers' adaptation to a new country: the formation of relationships, social networks and social trust. As such, the current conceptualisation ignores their practical barriers to leading fulfilling lives.

This report specifically explores how living and working conditions, access to services, and enjoyment of rights are connected in practice to participation in society and political life. Rather than concentrate solely on individual socio-economic trajectories in host countries, the report examines opportunities for participation, platforms for fostering interaction and encouraging civic and political engagement, and correspondingly, social ties between migrants and citizens. It concentrates on migrant workers in the agricultural<sup>54</sup> and care<sup>55</sup> sectors to gauge the importance of conventional mechanisms of integration - such as participation in the labour market and access to social rights - for social interaction and to highlight obstacles to participation.

Low paid migrant workers experience social isolation, exploitation and vulnerability so that even enforcement of their basic rights and access to services is in question, as well as their opportunities for language acquisition. Social and political participation in their host societies is especially challenging. Policies that can effectively promote their participation should in principle also work for other migrant populations, whose working and living conditions do not undermine their capacity to participate to the same degree. Beyond analysing the link between working conditions and opportunities for participation, this report argues that the

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50 Council of the European Union, "Justice and Home Affairs Council Meeting 2618th Common Basic Principles on Immigrants Integration" (Council of the European Union, 2004), [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf).

51 *ibid*

52 For a brief explanation, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/watch-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027-explained\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/watch-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027-explained_en).

53 European Commission, "The EC Reveals Its New EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027)," European Website on Integration (EU, November 24, 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/ec-reveals-its-new-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/ec-reveals-its-new-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027_en).

54 From this point, where possible, all references to migrant workers in agriculture and care will be referred to as migrant workers.

55 By care, the report refers both to care for older people and care for very young children, though the employment of migrants in low paid work in childcare is primarily an Irish issue because of the cost and limited availability of childcare places in the country.

concept of 'integration' itself should inform a wider narrative of social cohesion and solidarity, which would potentially be more relevant to EU aims and have a greater practical impact.

The reliance of certain sectors on non-EU migrants, or even migrants from lower income EU countries, has corresponded with pernicious political trends evoking fears of escalating migration patterns and deteriorating cultural norms and values. Politicians such as the British Brexit proponent and former MEP Nigel Farage, French media figure and probable presidential candidate Éric Zemmour, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, and far right parties such as the AfD in Germany and the League explicitly support anti-migrant policies, including closing facilities for assisting migrants and refusing entry at borders, and sometimes openly embrace Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, and racist attitudes.

The pandemic has proved that non-EU and EU migrants make an essential contribution to national economies, despite sometimes working in exploitative and unsafe environments. As an EU policy brief (2021) on seasonal labour in agriculture stated: "[t]he coronavirus pandemic, which disrupted harvests in the spring of 2020 as seasonal workers faced travel restrictions, also highlighted their essential role in EU agriculture and laid bare their sometimes appalling working and living conditions."<sup>56</sup> In fact, EU seasonal workers are entitled to the same rights as citizens of the host countries. Non-EU citizens, under the Seasonal Workers Directive of 2014,<sup>57</sup> should receive equal treatment to EU citizens, including access to some social benefits. However, the irregular status of some migrant workers and their financial positions leaves them vulnerable to exploitation.

In June 2020, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for states and the Commission to protect migrant workers in agriculture from Covid-19. The European Commission followed this resolution by issuing new guidelines in July 2020 for seasonal workers, including provision of adequate living and working conditions, adherence to safety and health regulations, education about worker rights, and attention to accommodation, transport, working hours, and social security.<sup>58</sup> However, this report questions whether these are sufficient to: improve working conditions for seasonal or permanent migrants; address the politicisation of migration in Europe and the persistent and related issues of social segregation, unemployment, lack of access to services, and barriers to integration.

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56 European Parliamentary Research Service, and Marie-Laure Augère-Granier. "Migrant Seasonal Workers in the European Agricultural Sector" (European Parliamentary Research Service, February 2021), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)689347\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS_BRI(2021)689347_EN.pdf).

57 European Commission, "Seasonal Workers Directive 2014/36/EU - Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings European Commission" (European Commission, 2014), [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/seasonal-workers-directive-201436eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/seasonal-workers-directive-201436eu_en).

58 European Commission, "Guidelines on Seasonal Workers in the EU in the Context of the Covid-19 Outbreak" (Accessed October 27, 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/guidelines\\_on\\_seasonal\\_workers\\_in\\_the\\_eu\\_in\\_the\\_context\\_of\\_the\\_covid-19\\_outbreak\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/guidelines_on_seasonal_workers_in_the_eu_in_the_context_of_the_covid-19_outbreak_en.pdf).

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## **2. SOCIAL COHESION AND EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY**

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# 2. SOCIAL COHESION AND EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY

## 2.1 Social cohesion: theory, policy and definition

Social cohesion is the subject of much academic and policy reflection. Definitions vary across policy and academic literature. Academic treatments of the concept usually make reference to a set of virtuous social attitudes, public behaviours and relationships that enable harmonious community life.<sup>59</sup> Rather than measuring the achievements of specific individuals and minority groups within a society (as is often done in integration policy studies), cohesion is a measure of the quality of relationships and inter-group life in diverse societies. It evokes the values of togetherness, interdependence and trust - as well as of fairness, inclusion and equality of opportunities. These public virtues form the kernel of contemporary cohesion policy agendas.

The connection to inter-group life and equal opportunities makes social cohesion particularly relevant for contemporary policymaking. Countries with high levels of social cohesion are better placed to tackle contemporary economic development challenges and flourish as diverse societies.<sup>60</sup> As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasises:

“[...] social cohesion is crucial for the peaceful management of collective action problems that naturally arise in transforming societies. The creation of trust and solidarity and the nurturing of the belief that everybody, regardless of his sex, age or ethnic identity can benefit from these new opportunities is essential [...] social cohesion is necessary for upholding a pluralistic society.”<sup>61</sup>

The more socially cohesive the society, the more resilient it is in the face of emerging and unexpected threats, such as climate change and Covid-19.<sup>62</sup> Individuals within those societies are more likely to trust social institutions and more willing to work together across social divides to tackle shared challenges. These qualities are key to building resilience in cities and facilitating crisis governance at the national and local levels.<sup>63</sup>

Social cohesion policies offer an appealing response to the contemporary challenges of deepening intergroup tensions and intolerant populist politics. Polarisation, intolerance and intercommunal conflicts are more common in societies where cross-community interactions are rare, when social groups feel that they are treated unfairly by local and state institutions, and where a significant share of the population feel that they and their children are unfairly deprived of equal access to economic opportunities and political voice.<sup>64</sup>

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59 For conceptual definitions of social cohesion, see: Kearns, Ade, and Ray Forrest, “Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance.” *Urban Studies* 37, no. 5-6 (2000): 995–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980050011208>.

And also, Menno Fenger, “Deconstructing Social Cohesion: Towards an Analytical Framework for Assessing Social Cohesion Policies” *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 2, no. 3 (2012): 39–54.

60 *ibid*

61 OECD, “Perspectives on Global Development: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World.” (OECD Publishing, 2011), [https://doi.org/10.1787/persp\\_glob\\_dev-2012-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/persp_glob_dev-2012-en).

62 Urban resilience is a growing area of urban research and policy initiative. According to the Resilient Cities Network, “Urban resilience is the capacity of a city’s systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and grow, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” Resilient Cities Network, “What is urban resilience.” (Resilient Cities Network. Accessed 11 October 202), <https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/what-is-resilience/>.

63 Xavier Fonseca, Stephan Lukosch, and Frances Brazier, “Social Cohesion Revisited: a New Definition and How to Characterize It.” *Innovation: The European Journal Of Social Science Research*, 32, no. 2 (2018): 231–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1497480f>.

64 Ade Kearns and Ray Forrest, “Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance.” *Urban Studies* 37, no. 5-6 (2000): 995–1017, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980050011208>.

The so-called 'nordic regime' countries (such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are commonly seen as examples of socially cohesive societies that feature more positive attitudes and relations between members of different social groups, a greater shared sense of solidarity and commitment to the common good, and stronger trust in public institutions.<sup>65</sup> Policy investments in social cohesion - including efforts to equalise access to economic opportunities and foster social trust - can significantly weaken the appeal of xenophobic populist movements and anti-migrant rhetoric.<sup>66,67,68</sup> They can also help drive improvements in subjective well-being and human development outcomes such as education attainment, economic innovation and infrastructural development.<sup>69</sup>

Social cohesion offers a policy framework through which to foster economic resilience, resolve social tensions, and promote a fair and inclusive society. It is particularly appealing to countries dealing with the challenges associated with immigration and refugee reception.<sup>70</sup> Migration and its misrepresentation by political actors is one of the main drivers of the recent surge of populist politics in Europe.<sup>71</sup> Where populist, anti-migrant beliefs take hold, immigrants and refugees find it more difficult to form local relationships, and experience a higher incidence of racist abuse and workplace discrimination. Promoting social cohesion should therefore be an integral part of integration policymaking.

This report considers how European countries with large populations of migrant workers employed in low-status occupations and in vulnerable economic and social positions can facilitate the integration of those workers while at the same time strengthening social cohesion. Do the bases for social cohesion exist and are they evolving within the four countries? What must be done to support low paid, socially isolated migrant workers so that they benefit from the institutions and services that may further connect them with society?

How is social cohesion measured? What are its concrete indicators? The answers to these questions depend on the theoretical frameworks and methodologies used to research social cohesion. Common indicators include:

- Frequency of contact and friendships between members of different ethnic group and social classes;
- Attitudes towards members of other ethnic, religious or economic groups;
- Frequency of pro-social or community-oriented behaviours (volunteering rates, political participation);
- Community trust measures - including generalised trust and trust in local and national institutions;
- Measures of belonging and attachment to local area, city or country;
- The degree of shared values and goals among people of a community, city or country;

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65 Georgi Dragolov, Zsófia S. Ignácz, Jan Lorenz, Jan Delhey, Klaus Boehnke, and Kai Unzicker, "Social Cohesion in the Western World: What Holds Societies Together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar". New York: (Springer International Publishing, 2016).

66 Carl C Berning, and Conrad Ziller, "Social trust and radical right-wing populist party preferences". *Acta Politica*, no. 52(2), (2017): 198-217, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/ap.2015.28>.

67 OECD, "Perspectives on Global Development: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World." (OECD Publishing, 2011), [https://doi.org/10.1787/persp\\_glob\\_dev-2012-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/persp_glob_dev-2012-en).

68 Ted Cantle, "Community Cohesion: a Report of the Independent Review Team". London: (The Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT), 2001), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239466847\\_Community\\_Cohesion\\_a\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_Independent\\_Review\\_Team](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239466847_Community_Cohesion_a_Report_of_the_Independent_Review_Team).

69 Georgi Dragolov, Zsófia S. Ignácz, Jan Lorenz, Jan Delhey, Klaus Boehnke, and Kai Unzicker, "Social Cohesion in the Western World: What Holds Societies Together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar". New York: (Springer International Publishing, 2016).

70 It should be noted that some researchers contend that increased diversity actually erodes social cohesion. This is a long-standing debate in the social scientific literature. By and large, meta-analytical studies have failed to corroborate this position, though evidence is mixed. For more information, see: Ethnic Diversity and Its Effects on Social Cohesion (Tom Van Meer, and Jochem Tolsma, "Ethnic Diversity and Its Effects on Social Cohesion." *Annual Review of Sociology*40, no. 1 (2014): 459–78, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043309>.) and Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion: Immigration, Ethnic Fractionalization and Potentials for Civic Action (Merlin Schaeffer, "Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion: Immigration, Ethnic Fractionalization and Potentials for Civic Action". London: (Routledge, 2014 ).

71 Butcher, Paul, and Alberto-Horst Neidhardt. "Fear and Lying in the EU: Fighting Disinformation on Migration with Alternative Narratives". (Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Friedrich- Ebert-Stiftung, the Fundación Pablo Iglesias and the European Policy Centre, 2020), [https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/disinformation\\_on\\_migration.pdf](https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/disinformation_on_migration.pdf).

- The strength of political efficacy, wherein people feel like they have a voice in community decision-making.<sup>72</sup>

These social indicators encompass attitudinal, behavioural and relational variables measured at the level of individuals and communities. Individual-level indicators are the most popular way of assessing social cohesion. However, it is also possible to use indicators at an institutional and societal level.<sup>73</sup> For example, social cohesion can also be reflected through:

- Economic and educational disparities within a society;
- Discriminatory legislation (usually within cross-country comparative study);
- Hate crime and racially targeted police violence rates in a city or country;
- The frequency of intercommunal violence;
- The prevalence of workplace discrimination (using CV-based field studies, for example);
- The density of civic organisations in a city/country.

The Council of Europe has recently defined social cohesion as “[reflecting] the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation”.<sup>74</sup> It considers social cohesion and migrant integration policies to be closely connected:

“Maintaining social cohesion in the context of inevitably greater diversity and migration in Europe requires a policy framework that assures respect for migrants’ rights, dignity and equality of treatment in the practice of states and societies. An integration framework must be based on legislation guaranteeing *equality and non-discrimination*, be linked to migration policy addressing labour market needs and composition and ensuring *decent work opportunities* for all and include *institutional and practical measures to ensure its implementation*.”<sup>75</sup> [emphases added]

It recommends a rights-based social cohesion policy centred on the upholding of decent working conditions for migrants, the protection of migrants’ human and labour rights, access to training and recognition of third country qualifications, and ensuring that migrant workers benefit from equal access to welfare, education, housing, and social security entitlements.<sup>76</sup>

Examining the challenges to contemporary governance, the OECD frames social cohesion within three principal components: social inclusion, social capital and social mobility. The presence of all three is needed to allow societies to maintain social harmony as they transform and adapt to the fast-paced, global challenges of the twenty-first century:

72 Some of the listed indicators are sometimes associated with the concept of “community cohesion”, as opposed to social cohesion. The main difference between the two concepts concerns the type of divisions and tensions each concept responds to: while the social cohesion agenda primarily responds to the problem of social exclusion and inequality in society, community cohesion is more focused on the challenge of getting different ethnic and religious groups to live together peacefully. In practice, both conceptions overlap and require similar policy interventions. This report uses the term ‘social cohesion’ to refer to both types of cohesion. For a more detailed comparison of the two concepts, see: Ted, Cantle, “Community Cohesion: a Report of the Independent Review Team”. London: (The Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT), 2001), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239466847\\_Community\\_Cohesion\\_a\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_Independent\\_Review\\_Team](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239466847_Community_Cohesion_a_Report_of_the_Independent_Review_Team).

73 For a detailed discussion of the different levels of measurement, see, Xavier Fonseca, Stephan Lukosch, and Frances Brazier. “Social Cohesion Revisited: a New Definition and How to Characterize It.” *Innovation: The European Journal Of Social Science Research*, 32, no. 2 (2018): 231–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1497480f>.

74 Council of Europe, “Article 271: Economic Migration, Social Cohesion and Development: Towards an Integrated Approach”. (2008), <https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/economic-migration-social-cohesion-and-development-towards-an-integrated-approach.pdf>.

75 Council of Europe, “8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for migration affairs: Economic Migration, Social Cohesion and Development: towards an Integrated Approach” (European Union, September 4, 2008), <https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/economic-migration-social-cohesion-and-development-towards-an-integrated-approach.pdf>.

76 *ibid* (Chapter III, Section 5).

“...a society [is] ‘cohesive’ if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.”<sup>77</sup>

Social capital, which captures dimensions such as trust and civic engagement in society, is seen to be a key component of a cohesion policy framework that aims to advance migrant integration. Concrete policies include promoting positive contact opportunities, intercultural tolerance and migrant self-organisation:

“Fostering positive bonding between immigrants and local people and bridging the gaps that may arise when diverse sets of norms intersect constitute key elements of integration. Policymakers need first to accept that culture and identity are not an obstruction to integration. The goodwill that social capital generates can then exert a positive effect on productivity and social cohesion.”<sup>78</sup>

Social capital has distinct advantages from a migrant integration perspective:

“Building social capital also entails supporting and promoting the right to organise, assemble, and be represented. By forming groups, immigrants who are already settled in the host country can help new arrivals with red tape and teach them to make the cultural adjustment to their new environment.”<sup>79</sup>

Bringing such discussion to the experiences of migrant workers in Europe, this report defines a socially cohesive society as one that affords migrant workers:

- (1) equal access to social rights and economic opportunities;
- (2) the opportunity to build positive and supportive local relationships and participate in the civic and political life of their communities.

Social cohesion is conceived in terms of migrants’ economic, political, social and civic/political inclusion, while distinguishing between its structural and social/civic components. The emphasis on opportunities to participate in civic and political life highlights the critical contribution made by civil society organisations, community initiatives, trade unions and more active forms of civic and political engagement to migrant workers’ social inclusion and broader social cohesion.

This report examines the scope for building community connections and promoting active civic and political engagement among migrants of diverse ethnic and socio-economic groups. These could exist within community activism, trade union activities, civic associations, workplaces and elsewhere. In practice, they reflect the motivation, capacity, and resources for including migrants, especially those in a particularly vulnerable financial and social position, in the activities of organisations, informal groups or social or political movements. They offer both migrants and citizens the chance to participate in the society in which they live and build collective strength in advocacy and community development skills.

The contribution of active engagement to migrants’ social inclusion raises questions for migrant integration policy – are contemporary approaches to integration too narrow, and thus less effective than they should be in enabling migrants to adapt to their new homes? Should EU and national policies encompass both rights-based approaches to improving working conditions and access to services as well as support for participation in society and political life? These are critical questions for those working on socially cohesive approaches to integration policymaking.

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<sup>77</sup> OECD, “Perspectives on Global Development: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World.” (OECD Publishing, 2011): 53, [https://doi.org/10.1787/persp\\_glob\\_dev-2012-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/persp_glob_dev-2012-en).

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*: 226

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

## 2.2 Social cohesion and EU migrant integration policy

The European Commission Action Plan on migrant integration explicitly positions social cohesion as a goal of its integration policy framework, even though it does not actually define the concept.<sup>80</sup> In practice, its policies and recommendations advance some aspects of social cohesion as understood in this report, while leaving others unaddressed. First, it advances policies designed to ensure that migrants enjoy equal access to social rights and economic opportunities as the local population: preconditions for social cohesion. These include facilitating migrants' equal access to housing, health services, education, skill training, labour market opportunities and entrepreneurial investment funding.

Second, the plan also recommends policies to facilitate positive relations between migrants and the rest of the population and promotes migrants' inclusion in local decision-making processes. These include policies designed to prevent migrant radicalisation and segregation in schools and housing; mitigate anti-migrant racism via educational programmes at schools and civil society and encourage continuous learning of host country culture and language. In addition, the plan includes policies to promote local tolerance and intergroup contact initiatives, such as inter-religious dialogue fora, volunteer groups and buddy programmes involving local residents and newly arrived migrants. These policies are largely consistent with the social and civic inclusion dimension of social cohesion, particularly because they affirm the importance of fostering harmonious relations between local and migrant populations in EU members states.

Inclusion runs throughout the EU's Action Plan. An inclusive approach to integration policy making is broadly understood as policies that address the particular needs and challenges faced by specific migrant groups, while at the same time ensuring that those policies do not, at the same time, harm or disadvantage host countries' local populations. The plan repeatedly stresses the importance of ensuring that integration measures leave neither migrants nor local populations feeling excluded. Otherwise, exclusion can slide into radicalisation, extremism and social conflict.

“A more cohesive and inclusive society for all can also help prevent the spread of all forms of extremist ideologies that can lead to terrorism and violent extremism. Enhanced preventive actions can, in turn, address societal tensions and extremist ideologies and thus foster integration and peaceful coexistence among communities and individuals.”<sup>81</sup>

Overall, the European Commission's focus on equality of rights, access to opportunities, language learning, diversity education and positive contact between migrants and locals is consistent with a social cohesion agenda. Nevertheless, the Commission's plan misses the opportunity to promote more active forms of social inclusion and participation. The Action Plan expects local stakeholders, such as NGOs and local authorities, to facilitate social contact between migrants and local populations, and contribute to national integration governance efforts:

“The Commission will seek to empower and enable all actors to contribute to [the integration] process [...] It is also important to ensure that all levels of governance – European, national, macro- regional, crossborder, regional and local – are fully involved in designing and implementing integration strategies, so as to maximise the effectiveness of the actions.”

In other words, local community actors are expected to function as facilitators of policy implementation. Little consideration is given to the potential of local and civic actors to act as platforms for active civic

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80 European Commission, “Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027” (EU Commission , November 24, 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files\\_en?file=2020-11/action\\_plan\\_on\\_integration\\_and\\_inclusion\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files_en?file=2020-11/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf).

81 *ibid* p. 6.

participation and solidarity-building. Migrant associations,<sup>82</sup> NGOs and trade unions can offer migrants opportunities to work together, shoulder to shoulder, with members of their local communities in pursuit of shared goals. Through helping to build a sense of solidarity and shared purpose between local and migrant populations, these forms of civic engagement hold greater promise for strengthening social cohesion in European host societies.

### 2.3 Social cohesion and national integration policies

Each national government in our case studies has implemented an integration strategy focused largely on language acquisition, citizenship, employment, and access to public services. The timing of these strategies differed, as did the pace of implementation. Spain introduced a strategy between 2007 and 2010, and then renewed it for 2011-2015.<sup>83</sup> The Irish government introduced its first strategy several years later, between 2017 and 2020, with an extension to the end of 2021. However, as of spring 2020, only 30 of its 31 local authorities had had a strategy at some point, currently had one, or were preparing one.<sup>84</sup> Germany, despite decades of migration as part of the guestworker programme, only announced an integration strategy after the influx of refugees in 2016. Its strategy is based on the principle of *'Fördern und Fordern'*, or 'support and demand' and is carried out at a state level.<sup>85</sup> In other words, federal state authorities provide financial and educational support for integration, which is conditional on migrant workers demonstrating willingness to integrate, especially by learning the language.

Greece published its first national strategy for the integration of third country nationals in 2013. It included specific measures and actions to be implemented in areas as diverse as service provision, introductory courses, employment, health, housing, political participation, anti-discrimination and intercultural dialogue, with emphasis on training and skills development for both TCNs and public employees dealing with migrant issues. In 2019, following public consultation, the national integration strategy was launched. It includes provision on education, labour market integration, racism and xenophobia.<sup>86</sup>

Notwithstanding, there have been no systematic policies in Greece to integrate migrants and alleviate regional inequalities. A recent report on the prospects and challenges of Greece's economy underlines the importance of strengthening social cohesion.<sup>87</sup> In light of the limited social mobility and marginalisation of large population groups - including women, young people and people with physical disabilities - the report argues for universal access to a dynamic labour market and high-quality education and health services. It also calls for a targeted social benefits system for the most vulnerable in Greek society.

In all the case study countries, migrants with irregular status have little formal access to language courses or public services, and thus remain excluded from activities associated with an integration strategy. However, as indicated above, they may perform a critical role in maintaining care services for older people and young children, enabling in turn women to work and earn income and alleviating pressure on the health service

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82 Migrant associations include more or less institutionalised migrant-led organisations (often from the same country) devoted to advancing the interests of the migrant groups in the host country.

83 European Commission, "Governance of Migrant Integration in Spain," EU Commission on Integration, accessed November 16, 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-across-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-across-europe_en).

84 The Immigrant Council of Ireland. "Local Authority Migrant Integration Strategies: Where We Are, Where We Need to Be and How to Get There," (2020), <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2020-04/KeepingitLocal2FULLREPORT.pdf>.

85 Bundesministerium des Innern (Federal Ministry of the Interior), "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 – Integrated Packages of Measures to Promote the Integration and Participation of Sinti and Roma in Germany" (European Commission, 2011). [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/roma\\_germany\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/roma_germany_strategy_en.pdf).

86 European Commission, "European Web Site on Integration - European Commission," EU Commission on Integration (Governance of migrant integration in Greece), accessed November 16, 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance/greece\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/country-governance/governance/greece_en).

87 Christopher Pissarides et al., "Lessons from the Economic-Epidemiological Frontier" (Project Syndicate, April 29, 2020), <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/economic-epidemiological-models-favor-covid19-social-distancing-by-christopher-pissarides-et-al-2020-04>.

and public services more generally. Recognising their contribution to society and economy while remaining outside legal immigration procedures is important for future policy.<sup>88</sup>

The existing strategies of our case study country governments on individual settlement and adaptation, as well as contribution to the economy, mean that civic and political engagement remain marginalised as political and policy priorities. A similar gap exists in statistical indicators designed to measure the progress of migrant integration in different dimensions.<sup>89</sup> Indicators of political integration, for example, may measure the share of migrants holding political office in a given country, but they do not cover the process of becoming more involved and connected at the local level.

Consequently, integration policies in EU member states do not tend to account for changes in individual status that evolve into participation, development of social networks, and identification with a community, rather than a particular social group. Instead, they assume that acquisition of language and employment and access to public services and support will organically lead to broader participation in the community. This, however, is often not the case.

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88 Ali Bracken, "Undocumented migrants in Ireland offered 'once in a generation' amnesty." *Irish Independent*, (2021), <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/undocumented-migrants-in-ireland-offered-once-in-a-generation-amnesty-40775476.html>.

89 For a more detailed discussion of the use of indicators in integration policymaking, see, OECD, and European Union. "Indicators of Immigrant Integration: Settling In," July 2, 2015, Chapter 1. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264234024-en>.

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# **AGRICULTURE**

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# **3. ESSENTIAL BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

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# 3. ESSENTIAL BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

## 3.1 Introduction

This section summarises the changing trends in agricultural production in Ireland, Germany, Greece and Spain and the importance of each country's agricultural sector in EU and global markets. In all case studies, migrant labour has had an increasingly important role in supplying labour in a sector that local workers are leaving and in supplying low wage labour as the globalisation of agricultural production (especially within European markets) has led to the rise of monopolistic agricultural supply chains that reduce farmers' price-setting power and put downward pressures on wages and conditions. The basic structure of each country's agricultural markets is outlined: their products and relative economic importance. Finally, significant trends in the rate and distribution of migrant employment in the agricultural sectors of each case study are highlighted and explained.

### Germany

Seasonal migrant workers, especially from non-EU countries are increasingly important – if not vital - to the agricultural sector in our four case studies. Germany is one of the world's top agri-food<sup>90</sup> exporting nations, ranking third after the United States and the Netherlands.<sup>91,92</sup> In the 1990s, seasonal migration grew in importance with the relaxation of legal regulations and bilateral agreements on seasonal work in force with Eastern European countries not yet in the EU.<sup>93</sup> Now migrants constitute 90 per cent of seasonal workers in the harvesting of crops such as strawberries and grapes for wine.<sup>94,95</sup> The demanding physical work and relatively low wages have made agriculture an increasingly unattractive option to local workers.

In 2021, an estimated 270,000 migrants were employed in the seasonal harvesting of strawberries, asparagus, blueberries, cucumber, potatoes and apples, with wine growing as another important harvest.<sup>96</sup> The majority of migrants are middle-aged or older, slightly more likely to be men and come from south-east Europe.<sup>97</sup>

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90 See here for the wide range of production incorporated under the category of agri-foods: <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC182606/>.

91 Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. "Foreign Trade Policy, Facts and Figures on German Agricultural Exports." (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of Germany, January 2, 2020), <https://www.bmel.de/EN/topics/international-affairs/foreign-trade-policy/facts-figures-german-agricultural-exports.html>.

92 Open Society Foundation, "Covid-19, Agri-Food Systems, and Migrant Labour. The Situation in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden." (Open Society Foundation 2020), <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ccf241cc-89b2-4b44-a595-90bd77edab3d/covid19-agrifood-systems-and-migrant-labour-20200715.pdf>.

93 SVR (Sachverständigenrat für Integration und Migration) (Expert Council on Integration and Migration), " Alternativen Zum Asylantrag? Legale Migrationswege Nach Deutschland Für Drittstaatsangehörige Ohne Schutzperspektive (Alternatives to Applying for Asylum? Legal Migration Routes to Germany for Third-Country Nationals without Protection Perspective)" (2018), [https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SVR-FB\\_Alternativen\\_zum\\_Asylantrag.pdf](https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SVR-FB_Alternativen_zum_Asylantrag.pdf).

94 Deutscher Bauernverband (DBV) (German Farmers' Union), "Entwicklung Des Kapital- Und Arbeitseinsatzes in Der Landwirtschaft." (Entwicklung des Kapital- und Arbeitseinsatzes in der Landwirtschaft (Development of Capital and Labour Input in Agriculture) , 2019), <https://www.bauernverband.de/themendossiers/strukturwandel/themendossier/entwicklung-des-kapital-und-arbeitseinsatzes-in-der-landwirtschaft>.

95 DGB (German Trade Union Confederation) Bildungswerk . 2021. Forum Migration Juni 2021. Online: <https://www.dgb-bildungswerk.de/forum-migration-juni-2021> (Accessed: 13.08.2021).

96 European Parliament , "Migrant Seasonal Workers in the European Agricultural Sector," Europarl (EU, 2021), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)689347\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS_BRI(2021)689347_EN.pdf).

97 Open Society Foundation, "Covid-19, Agri-Food Systems, and Migrant Labour. The Situation in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden." (Open Society Foundation 2020), <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ccf241cc-89b2-4b44-a595-90bd77edab3d/covid19-agrifood-systems-and-migrant-labour-20200715.pdf>.

Migrants are also over-represented in the meat industry, another important sector in Germany's agri-food system. An estimated 35,000 foreign workers are employed via sub-contracts and posted work.<sup>98</sup> Most come from Romania and, to a much lesser extent, from Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, but also non-EU countries such as Mozambique, Vietnam and Belarus.

The demand for seasonal migrants in Germany has historically been met mainly by workers from Poland and Romania in particular (see Figure 3:1). However, Germany was guaranteed a wide pool of potential migrant workers with the accession of Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria between 2004 and 2013; the end of special restrictions on access to the job market for migrants from new EU member states and the huge wage differentials within the EU.

**Figure 3:1: Origin of foreign seasonal workforce in Germany, 2016 (% estimates for 2016)**



Source: Author's elaboration. Original graphic in DGB Bildungswerk 2021.

Asylum seekers are rarely encountered in harvesting or in meat processing. Agriculture is considered to be "marginal employment" and harvesting is not considered an appropriate way to integrate refugees and therefore not encouraged by the authorities. In recent years, a decline in EU nationals' interest in seasonal work in Germany, especially in the agricultural sector,<sup>99</sup> has been explained by economic improvement in Poland and Romania as well as by the increasing competition for workers between agriculture and other economic sectors such as construction and tourism.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, there have been reports of an increasing trend for Ukrainians to enter on student visas but become agricultural migrant workers.

For employers prone to abusive practices, students are especially attractive: they possess a residence permit, do not have to be paid the minimum wage and are more exposed to wage dumping and other forms of exploitation. It is anticipated that there will be an increasing demand for seasonal workers from third countries in the future and the German authorities have shown renewed interest in bilateral placement agreements with Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Moldova and North Macedonia.

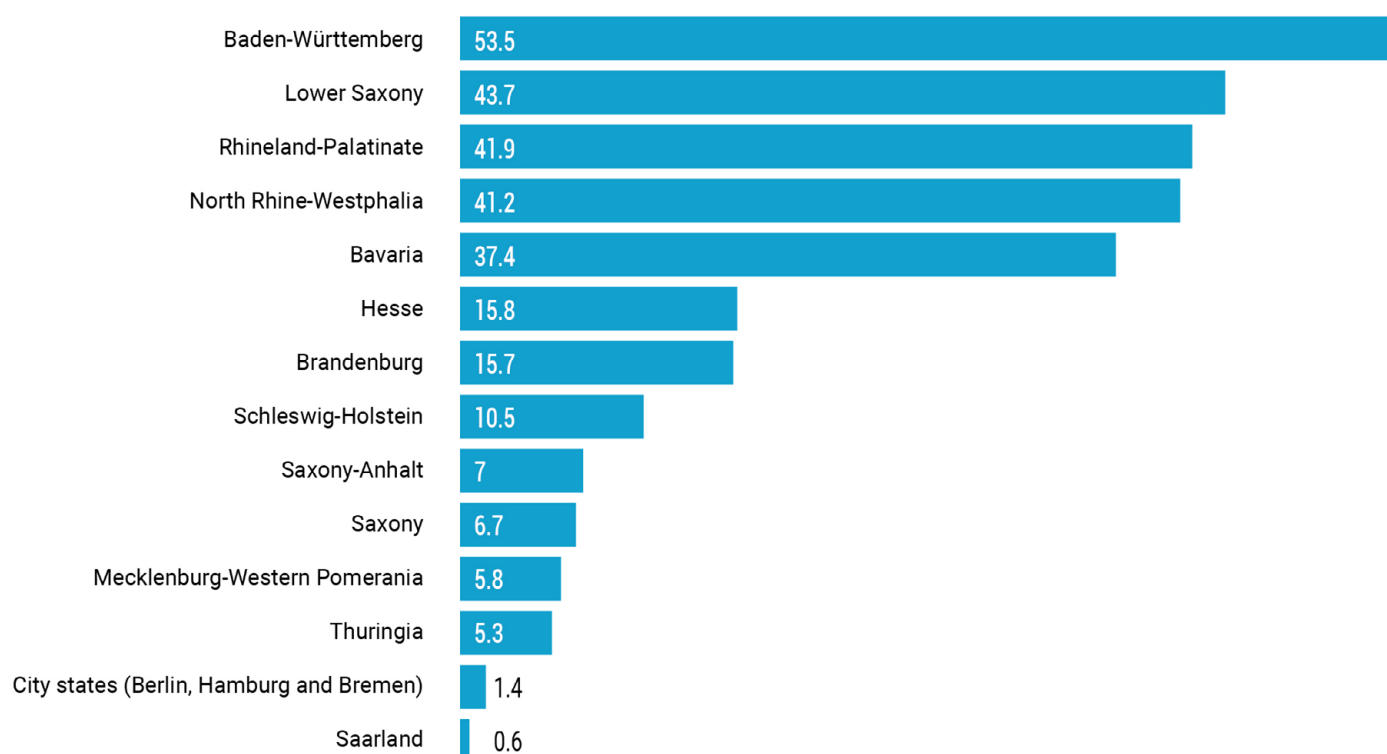
The number of seasonal workers in Germany varies by region, with more in the south and south-west of the country (see Figure 3:2). As the majority come from south-east Europe - and therefore enjoy free mobility rights within the EU - it is common practice to travel to Germany during the harvesting season. After the season is over, the majority travel back to their country of origin or migrate further to other workplaces or even to other countries in the EU.

98 DGB Bildungswerk (DGB Education Centre), "Forum Migration Juni 2021" (Forum Migration, 2021), <https://www.dgb-bildungswerk.de/forum-migration-juni-2021>.

99 GLFA (Gesamtverband der deutschen Land- und Forstwirtschaftlichen Arbeitgeberverbände) (Confederation of German Agricultural and Forestry Employers' Associations), "Hintergrundpapier Zur Beschäftigung Von Saisonarbeitskräften (Background Paper on the Employment of Seasonal Workers)" (GLFA, 2019), <https://www.glfa.de/saisonarbeitskraefte/>.

100 Claudia Lechner, "Attracting and Protecting Seasonal Workers from Third Countries. Study by the German National Contact Point for the European Migration Network." (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2020), [https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/EMN/Studien/wp89-saisonarbeitskraefte.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=11](https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/EMN/Studien/wp89-saisonarbeitskraefte.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=11).

**Figure 3:2: Number of seasonal workers in each German federal state, 2021**



Source: Author's elaboration. Original graphic in: Manès Weisskircher, "Arbeitsmigration während der Corona-Pandemie. Saisonarbeitskräfte aus Mittel- Und Osteuropa in der Deutschen Landwirtschaft (Labour Migration during the Corona Pandemic. Seasonal workers from Central and Eastern Europe in German agriculture)" (MIDEM-Policy Paper 01/21, 2021).

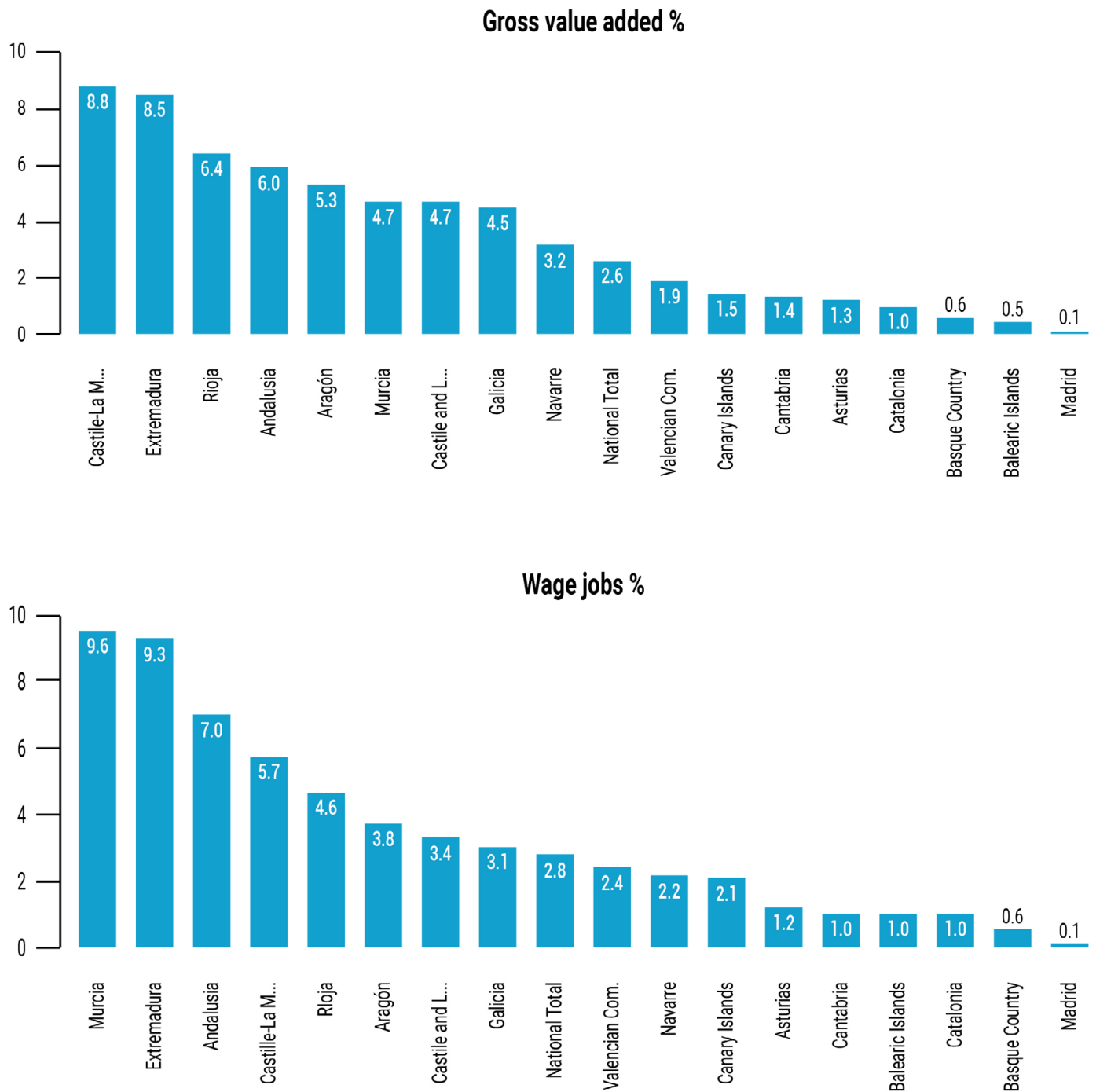
## Spain

In 2020, Spain was the leading fruit and vegetable exporter in the EU and one of the top three exporters worldwide, with the US and China.<sup>101</sup> While the agricultural sector in Spain represents only 2.6 per cent of its GDP and 2.8 per cent of its wage-earning employment, regional disparities hide its significance as a major economic driver in the Andalusian provinces of Huelva, Almeria and Murcia (See Figures 3.3). In Almeria, agriculture represents 15.1 per cent of the GDP and 21 per cent of employment.<sup>102</sup> In Andalusia, use of migrant workers is either widespread or the norm, with the three regions of Almeria, Huelva and Jaen, accounting for 75 per cent of all migrant employment in the agricultural sector in Spain.

101 Fresh Plaza. "Spain Was the EU's Leading Producer of Fruit and Vegetables in 2020." Spain Agricultural Outputs (Fresh Plaza, 2021), <https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9312437/spain-was-the-eu-s-leading-producer-of-fruit-and-vegetables-in-2020/>.

102 Instituto Nacional De Estadística. (2019). "2019 Statistics on Regional Accounts." (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019), <https://www.ine.es>.

**Figure 3:3: Scale of the agricultural sector in GDP and regional wage-earning employment, 2019 (Spain)**

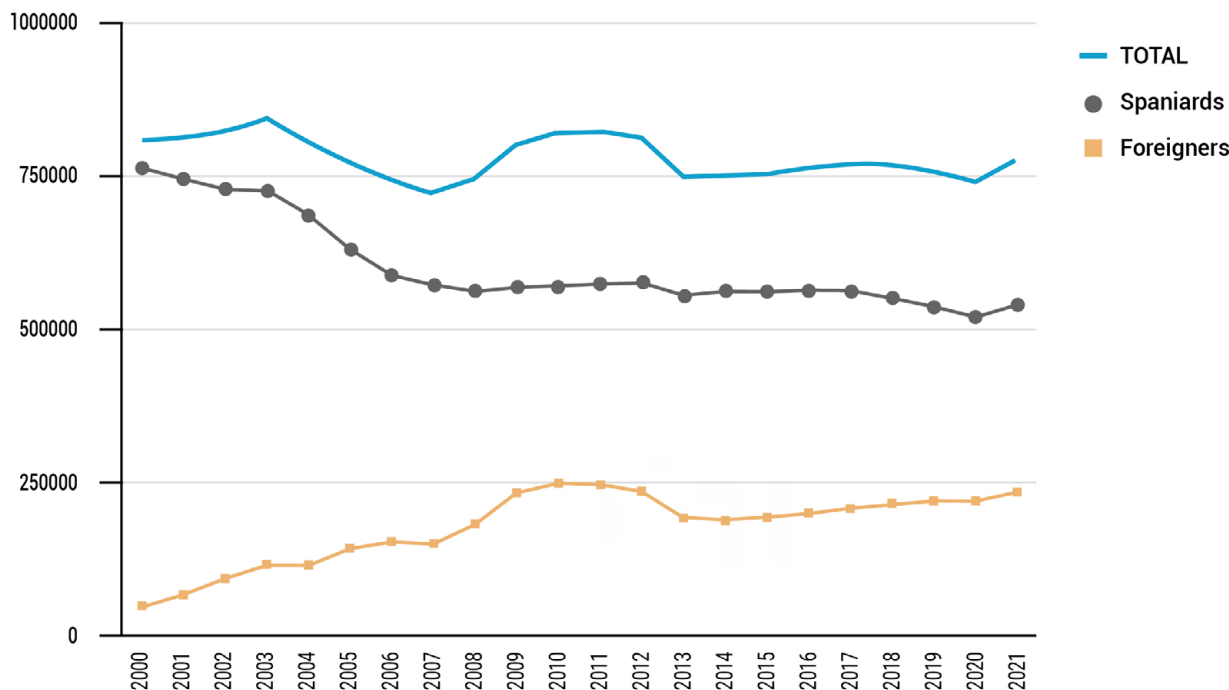


Source: Instituto Nacional De Estadística. (2019). "2019 Statistics on Regional Accounts." INE. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019. <https://www.ine.es>.

In Spain, the agricultural sector underwent profound transformation in the 1990s. With international trade liberalised, and the scale of transnational agri-food companies' operations expanded, a production model based on small family farms oriented towards the domestic market gave way to a business model of intensive export-oriented agriculture. Production is concentrated in certain regions and dominated by large farms with high input requirements and a massive transformation of labour into wage-earners and integrated into large global agri-food distribution chains.

The dependence on large international agri-food distributors has increased the competitive pressure on local producers weakening their bargaining position in terms of sales prices, their capacity to choose which crops they grow and delivery times. This helps explain the use of labour cost containment strategies to maintain farm profitability. The employment of immigrant workers is configured as a mechanism to guarantee the availability of flexible and cheap labour to meet production requirements. Therefore, as has happened in Germany, agriculture in Spain has been a main point of entry to the labour market for newly arrived immigrants who have gradually replaced Spanish-born workers (please see Figure 3:4).

**Figure 3:4: Agricultural employment by nationality in Spain (2000-2021)**



Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social.” (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social \* actualizado a 21 - Octubre - 2021 \*. Accessed October 31, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

Even during the 2008 financial crisis, when the country’s unemployment rate soared and low paid jobs were destroyed in construction, retail, and hospitality, few Spaniards started working on farms. However, migrants, who had found better employment in those sectors, were forced to return to work in the fields to make ends meet. Figure 3:5 shows the increase in the percentage of migrants in the sector from just over 5 per cent in 2000 to 30.4 per cent in 2021.<sup>103</sup> This is a much higher percentage than migrants in the economy as a whole (8.9 per cent).<sup>104</sup>

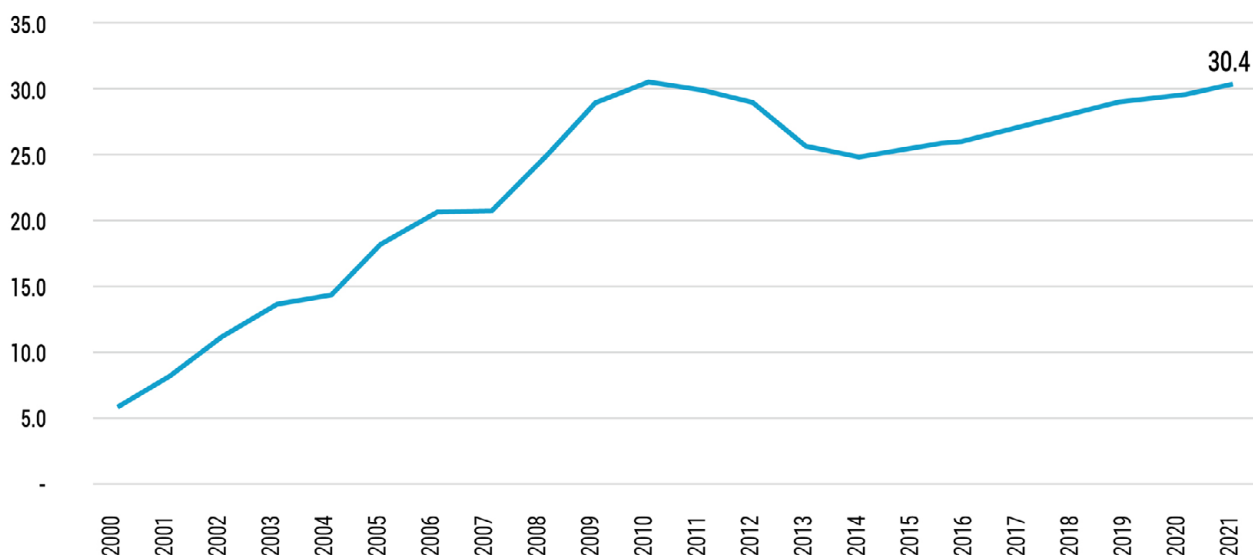
Migrant workers are concentrated in the provinces of the Mediterranean arc and along the Atlantic coast. In 12 of the 17 Spanish regions the proportion of immigrant workers in agriculture is higher than the national average. They are the majority of the sector’s workforce in seven regions (see Figure 3:6). In 2021, migrant workers represented 14 per cent (235,642) of the total agricultural workforce, of which 72 per cent is from non-

<sup>103</sup> A percentage that is much higher than migrant workers in total wage-earning employment in the economy, which is limited to 8.9 per cent. This average hides, however, large variations between territories, in such a way that in 12 of the 17 Spanish regions the proportion of migrant workers in agriculture is higher than the national average, and in seven regions, they are the majority of workers in the sector (Graph 4). In the provinces specialised in export-oriented produce, the most labour-intensive of them all, the proportion of foreign workers is very high.

<sup>104</sup> January 2021 data. Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social,” Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social \* actualizado a 21 - Octubre - 2021 \* (MITES, October 21, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

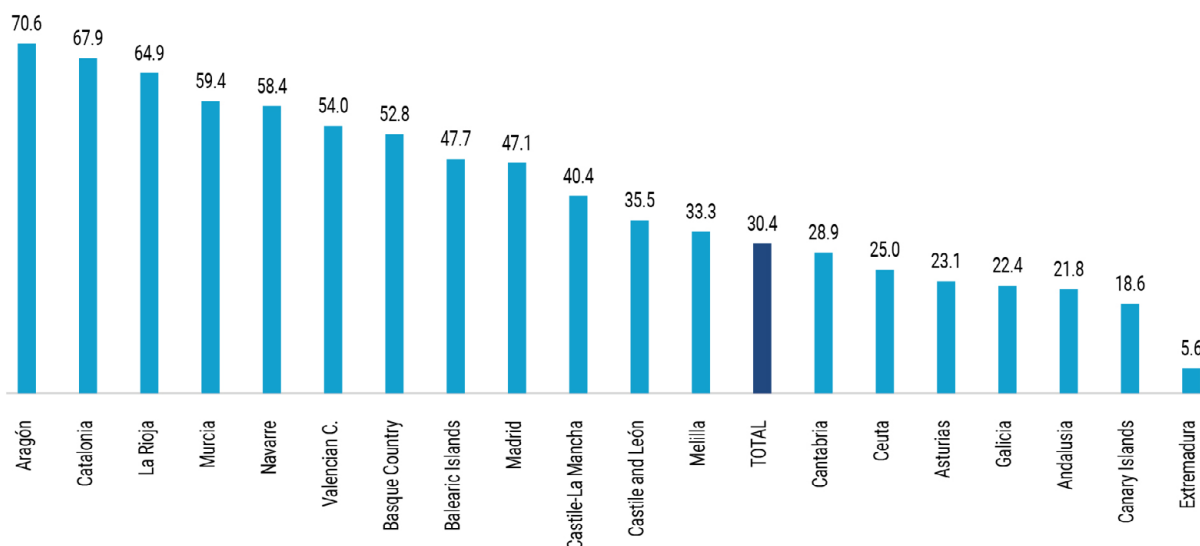
EU countries. The largest groups are Moroccans (38.6 per cent), Romanians (22.4 per cent) and Ecuadorians (4.2 per cent), as well as nationals from several sub-Saharan African countries grouped under “other non-EU countries” (23.2 per cent) (see Figure 3:7). In January 2021, 235,642 foreign workers registered in the special agricultural regime in Spain of which 76% were men.<sup>105</sup>

**Figure 3:5: The percentage of migrant workers in wage earning employment in agriculture (Spain) (2000-2021)**



Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social.” (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social \* actualizado a 21 - Octubre - 2021 \*. Accessed October 31, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

**Figure 3:6: Share of jobs held by migrant workers per autonomous communities, 2021, (Spain).**



Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social.” (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social \* actualizado a 21 - Octubre - 2021 \*. Accessed October 31, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

105 Ibid.

**Table 3:7: Migrant workers (by nationality) registered in the Special Agricultural Regime (Spain) (January 2021)**

Nationality	People	% total	% of Inscriptions
MOROCCO	90,886	38.6	38.6
ECUADOR	10,779	4.6	17.5
PAKISTAN	5,093	2.2	18.5
BOLIVIA	4,182	1.8	10.3
COLOMBIA	2,313	1	3.2
UKRAINE	1,839	0.8	4.5
Non-EU countries	54,692	23.2	9
<b>Non-EU total</b>	<b>169,784</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>
ROMANIA	52,838	22.4	18.8
BULGARIA	7,172	3	14.5
PORTUGAL	1,687	0.7	3.7
POLAND	1,586	0.7	7.1
LITHUANIA	1,372	0.6	21.9
Other EU countries	1,203	0.5	0.6
<b>EU total</b>	<b>65,858</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>TOTAL MIGRANT WORKERS</b>	<b>235,642</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL SPANIARDS</b>	<b>539,785</b>		<b>3.9</b>

Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), "Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social." (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social, October 21, 2021a). Accessed October 31, 2021, <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

The agricultural sector has one of the lowest wage levels in the Spanish economy, 62.3 per cent of the national average, according to the Labour Force Survey (2019).<sup>106</sup> Consequently, Spanish-born workers have moved to sectors of the economy that generate slightly better paid jobs or similarly low-paid jobs but with better working conditions such as construction, hospitality or retail.

The agricultural labour market in Spain has experienced similar structural changes to those affecting the care sector. Migrants have gradually replaced Spanish born workers as they have moved out of agriculture and to other sectors of the economy, which while generating low status work, have better pay and conditions than agriculture. Agricultural producers tended to recruit women from Eastern Europe, particularly from Romania and Poland and then in 2006, when those countries joined the European Union, from Morocco.

Moroccan seasonal workers are employed by recruitment firms sent to hire workers in their countries of origin (known as GECCO in Spanish). This recruitment method, while considered a model of "best circular migration practice" by some authorities and employers - and which has even received European Union aid to facilitate it - is detrimental to migrant workers' working rights and conditions and leads to discrimination and human rights abuses.

106 Instituto Nacional de Estadística. "Encuesta De Población Activa (EPA). Serie Histórica (Datos En Miles De Personas)." Sección prensa / Encuesta de Población Activa (EPA). Organización Estadística en España, 2019. [https://www.ine.es/prensa/epa\\_tabla.htm](https://www.ine.es/prensa/epa_tabla.htm).



## Greece

According to the most recent census, Greece's immigrant population was 912,000, accounting for 8.4% of the overall population.<sup>107</sup> It has considerable advantages in the agri-food sector due to its Mediterranean climate, natural environment and the variety and quality of its agricultural products. In 2017, the value added generated by the primary sector and the food and beverage industry amounted to 6.6 per cent of GDP (€11.8 billion), compared to an average of 3.5 per cent in the EU, with the agricultural sector being 50 per cent of that, followed by manufacturing (43.6 per cent), fisheries (5.9 per cent) and forestry (0.6 per cent).<sup>108</sup> The sector employs 466,000 people and contributes approximately 4 per cent of GDP, a consistent figure for the past five years.

However, the sector also has persistent structural vulnerabilities.<sup>109</sup> These include small and fragmented farm holdings, low productivity, inefficient organisation, low integration of new technologies and equipment, insufficient vocational training, low levels of research and development, high dependency on subsidies, and lack of branding.

Migrants provide a crucial supply of labour to the agricultural sector in Greece. In 2011, the share of migrant labourers in Greece's primary sector stood at 19.7%.<sup>110</sup> (Please see Figure 3:8 for changes in levels of agricultural employment and its contribution to GDP between 1995 and 2019.) The economic development of the country through EU membership (joining in 1981) led to improvements in the quality of living and educational level of local young people, who then moved on to better paid jobs. Demand for labour in the agricultural and tourist sectors consequently increased.<sup>111</sup> Migrant labour was seen as the 'saviour' of Greek agriculture, providing the main source of low paid 'labour hands' in rural areas.<sup>112</sup> This was in line with immigration policy that saw migrants purely in terms of their economic function, a 'labour reserve army' securing low labour costs in the long-term for local/rural entrepreneurs and farmers. The majority work in low-status jobs, such as unskilled labour, with one third working as specialised agricultural labourers.<sup>113</sup>

Due to the lack of a legal framework for migrant employment and residence, the vast majority of agricultural migrant workers in Greece are informally employed seasonal workers, estimated at 90,000-100,000. By comparison, the total number of 'registered' seasonal workers in 2016 was approximately 52,000. More broadly, the total registered agricultural workforce in 2019 stood at 466,000, or 13 per cent of the total Greek workforce.<sup>114</sup> Only 17% of them comprised waged non-family employees, thus underscoring the dominance of family labour in Greece's agricultural workforce. Please see Figure 3:9 for a breakdown of registered migrant workers by country of origin and gender (in 2011).

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107 Hellenic Statistical Authority, "2011 Population-Housing Census," 2011 Population-Housing Census - ELSTAT, 2011, <https://www.statistics.gr/en/2011-census-pop-hous>.

108 Pissaridis et al. 2020: 203

109 Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), "Report on the Greek Economy". Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE, 2021), [http://iobe.gr/greek\\_economy\\_en.asp?PD=2020](http://iobe.gr/greek_economy_en.asp?PD=2020).

110 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Loukia-Maria Fratsea, Stavros Spyrellis, and Pavlos Baltas, "Exploring the Contribution of Migrant Labour in Greek Agriculture." *Italian Review of Agricultural Economics* 76, no. 1 (2021): 33–48.

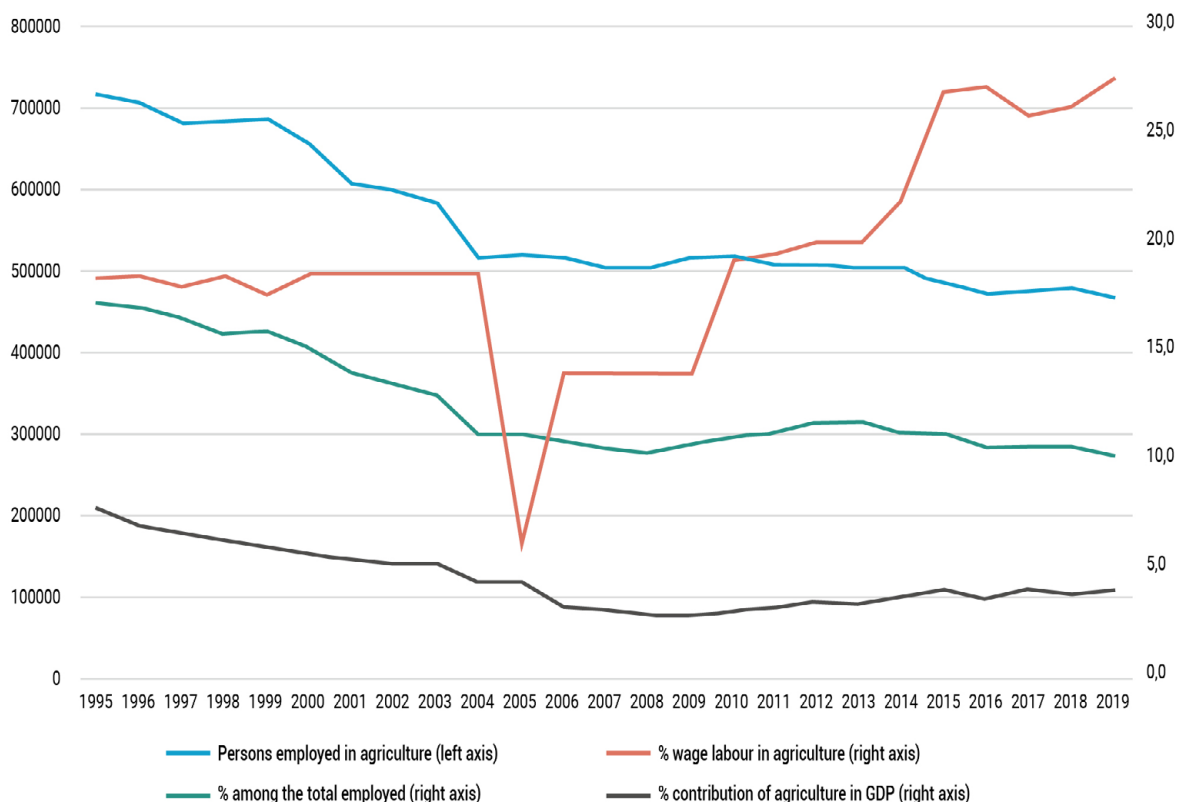
111 Charalambos Kasimis and Chryssa Kassimi, "Greece: A History of Migration". (Migration Information Source, June 1 2004), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/greece-history-migration>.

112 Charalambos Kasimis and Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, "The Multifunctional Role of Migrants in the Greek Countryside: Implications for the Rural Economy and Society." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 99–127.

113 Census 2021 (author's own calculation).

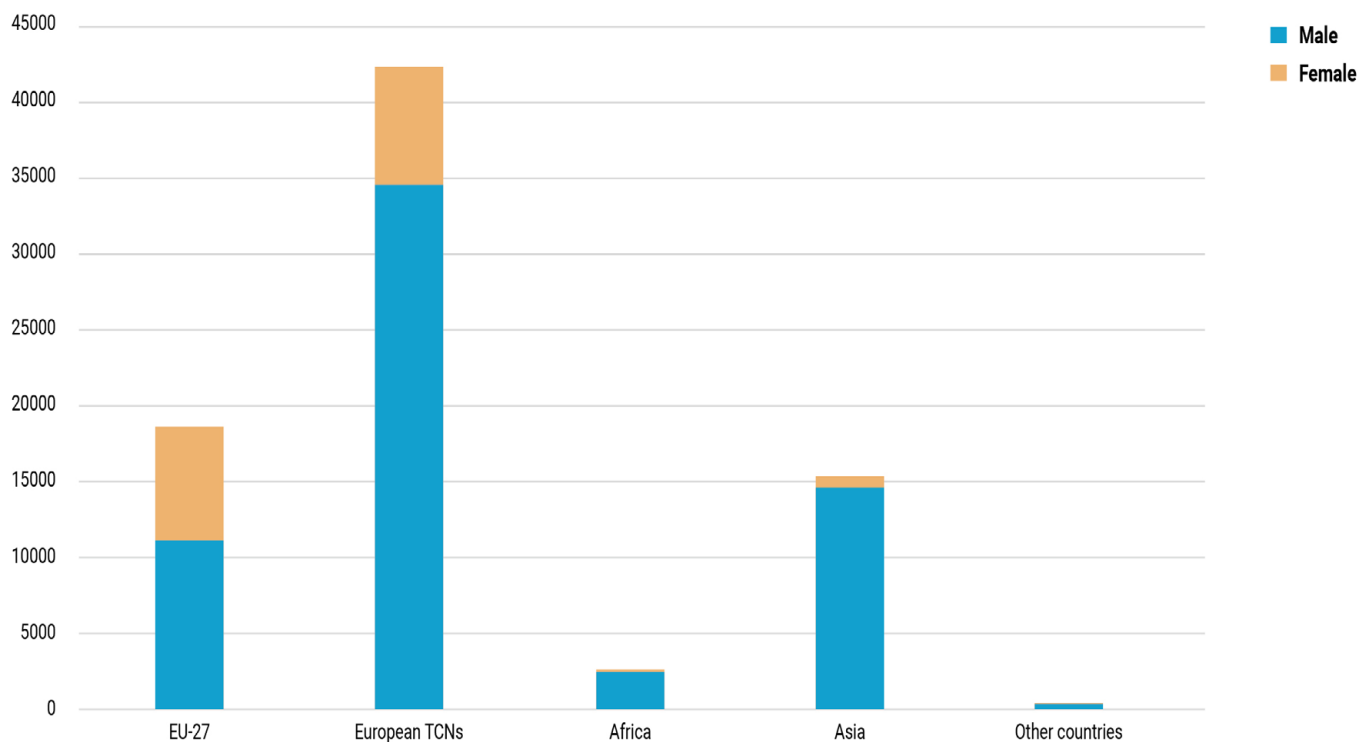
114 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Loukia-Maria Fratsea, Stavros Spyrellis, and Pavlos Baltas, "Exploring the Contribution of Migrant Labour in Greek Agriculture." *Italian Review of Agricultural Economics* 76, no. 1 (2021): 33–48. The agricultural workforce figure (466,000) only includes the registered workforce. It therefore excludes all informally employed agricultural workers.

**Figure 3:8: Evolution of agricultural employment and agriculture's contribution to GDP, 1995-2019 (Greece)**



Source: ELSTAT, National Accounts, 1995-2019 (Authors' elaboration)

**Figure 3:9: Migrant labour in agriculture by gender and wider regions, 2011 (Greece)**

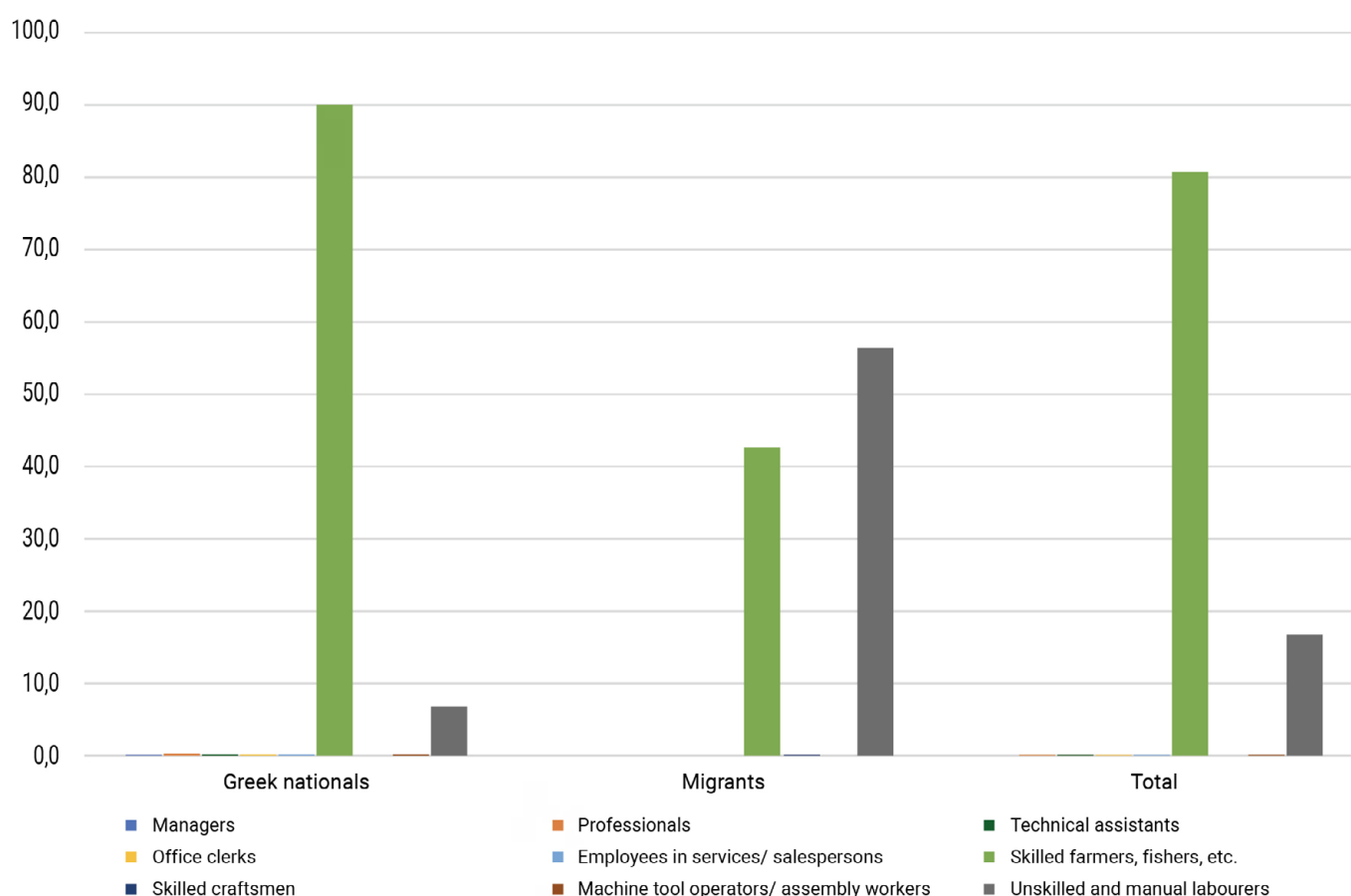


Source: ELSTAT, Population censuses (Authors' elaboration)

Albanians are the largest migrant group, largely composed of women. The majority arrived between 1990–1995. However since 2000, the number of African and Asian migrants has increased with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who tend to be men, working in the most precarious and hazardous jobs in manufacturing/processing and agriculture.

The Greek legalisation programmes of 2001 and 2005-07 allowed a significant proportion of migrants to legalise their residence/status which was followed by intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral occupational mobility into construction or services. However, agriculture was still a secondary income for many migrants in low season periods. The number of migrant labourers employed in agriculture increased from 74,922 in 2001 to 79,271 in 2011, while the share of female migrant agricultural employment remained at the same level. By 2011, one seventh of total migrant workers in the agricultural sector were female,<sup>115</sup> mainly from Albania, Bulgaria and Romania (see Figure 3:9). While the majority (56.5 per cent) of migrants are labourers, a good proportion (42.8 per cent) are registered as skilled farmers (See Figure 3:10).<sup>116</sup>

**Figure 3:10: Greek nationals & migrants employed in agriculture by occupational group, 2011**



Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, “El Stat,” Statistics, 2001, <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SAM05/2001>

The economic effects of migration have been beneficial for Greece’s economy: the GDP growth rate increased; the agricultural sector, which had consisted mainly of small and medium enterprises, has been revitalised; inflationary pressures have been dampened; and there have been short-term positive impacts of immigration

115 Papadopoulos, A. G, L. M Fratsea, S Spyrellis, and P Baltas, “Exploring the Contribution of Migrant Labour in Greek Agriculture.” *Italian Review of Agricultural Economics* 76, no. 1 (2021): 33–48.

116 Authors’ own calculations.

on the social security system. However, it has also had adverse distributional consequences. It has been argued that immigrants have contributed to the expansion of the already large informal economy; there has been competition in the labour market between Greek 'unskilled' and semi-skilled workers; and an increase in income inequality and unemployment for low paid workers.<sup>117</sup> Overall, rural areas appear to have been more resilient than urban ones to the after effects of the crisis, and migrants have filled vacancies previously unfilled, contributing to the revitalisation of the agricultural sector.<sup>118</sup>

## Ireland

Agriculture is also a critical sector of the Irish economy. With 137,000 farms producing over €8 billion in output, the agri-food supply chain stretches from rural and coastal areas all across Ireland to the UK, Europe and further afield, contributing approximately ten per cent of Irish merchandise exports and 7.7 per cent of total employment.<sup>119</sup> In 2019, 90% of all goods made in Ireland were exported to over 180 markets worldwide at a value of €14.5 billion.

The mushroom industry is the largest horticultural sector, with a farm gate value<sup>120</sup> of 120 million and employing over 3,500 people. Annually, Irish farmers have relied on between 3,000-4,000 seasonal workers from Europe to harvest fruit and vegetable crops. For example, 77 per cent of workers in the industry are foreign nationals.

The Irish meat processing sector is also a valuable domestic industry totalling 4.5 billion for sales and 4 billion for exports in 2018.<sup>121</sup> With labour being one of the highest costs for firms in the industry, the desire to decrease labour costs has led to its increasing reliance on migrants mainly from Romania, Bulgaria, and Brazil. Nearly 60 per cent of workers in meat production are non-Irish, with just over half of migrant workers coming from Eastern Europe and the rest from non-EU countries.<sup>122</sup>

Migrants have been an important long-term component of the agricultural labour force in Ireland. In the desire to decrease labour costs, the sector has exploited workers from Romania, Bulgaria, and Brazil for decades, seeking these jobs out of necessity, and in doing so are left susceptible to exploitation. In the mid-1990s, economic growth led to an influx of migrants - the largest ethnic make up of which consisted of former Eastern Bloc countries. The 2004 introduction of twelve new EU member states increased immigration to Ireland even further. (see Figures 3:11 and 3:12.) In 1991, less than 55,000 of Ireland's residents were born outside the Republic of Ireland or the UK. This rose almost tenfold to over half a million by 2016. Nationally, 14.6 per cent of Ireland's workforce is now non-Irish nationals, with almost half of this population employed in food services, manufacturing, human health and social work.

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117 Ioannis Cholezas, and Panos Tsakoglou, "The Economic Impact of Immigration in Greece: Taking Stock of the Existing Evidence." (*Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, 2009) no. 1-2: 77-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683850902723439>.

118 Mark James Scott et al., in *The Routledge Companion to Rural Planning* (London etc.: Routledge, 2020), pp. 183-192.; Charalambos Kasimis and Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, "The Multifunctional Role of Migrants in the Greek Countryside: Implications for the Rural Economy and Society," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): pp. 99-127, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183042000305708>.

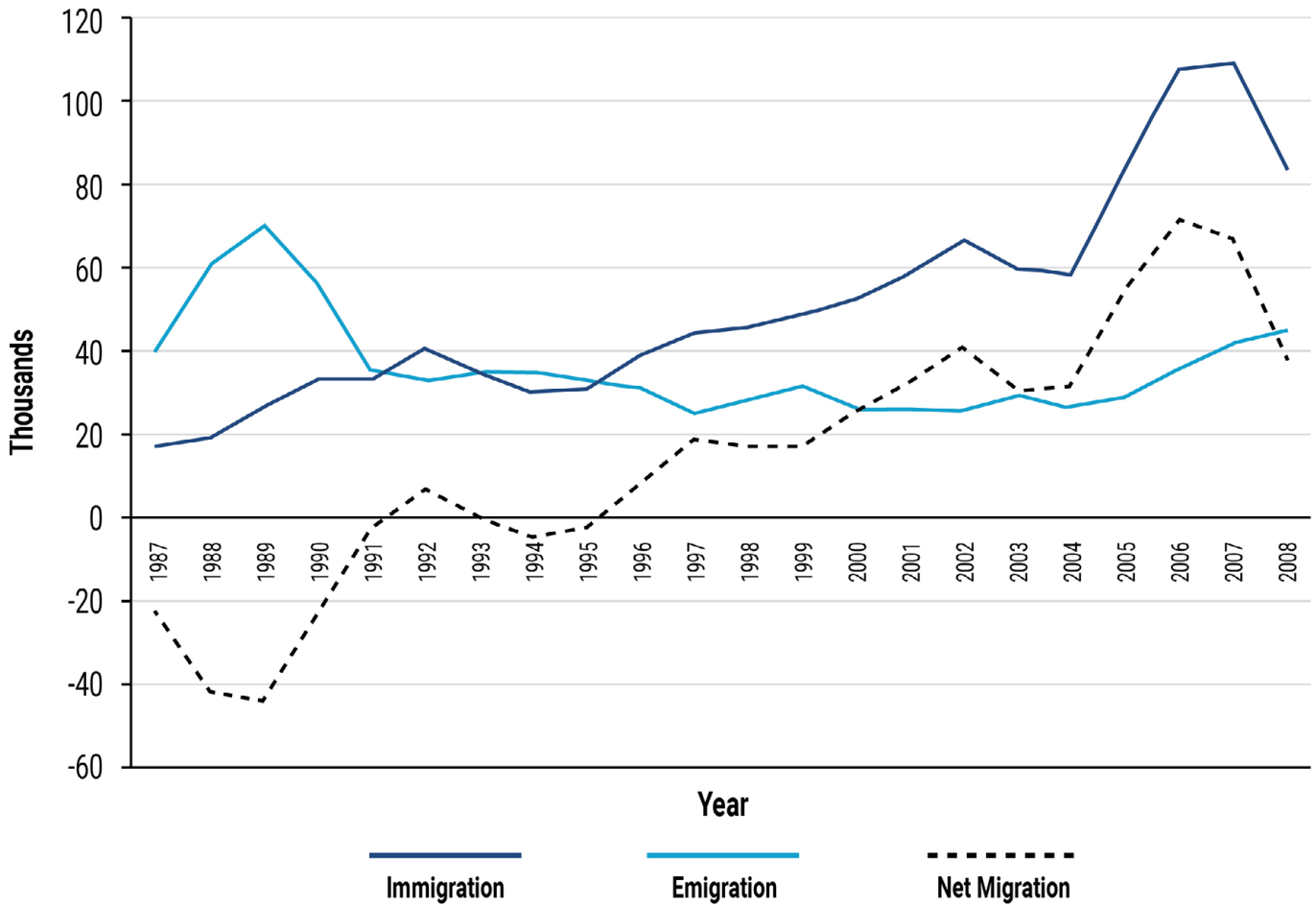
119 Irish Horticulture Industry, "Irish Agriculture and Food & Drink Sector." (Irish Food Board. Accessed October 28, 2021), <https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/irish-sector-profiles/irish-agriculture-food-drink-sector/>.

120 Farm gate value; defined as the market value of a product minus the selling costs ( e.x. transport costs, marketing costs).

121 IBEC for Irish Business, "Growing a sustainable Irish meat industry Meat Industry Ireland". (2021), <https://www.ibec.ie/connect-and-learn/industries/food-and-drink/meat-industry-ireland>.

122 Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland." (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948\\_COVID-19\\_AND\\_NON-IRISH\\_NATIONALS\\_IN\\_IRELAND](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948_COVID-19_AND_NON-IRISH_NATIONALS_IN_IRELAND).

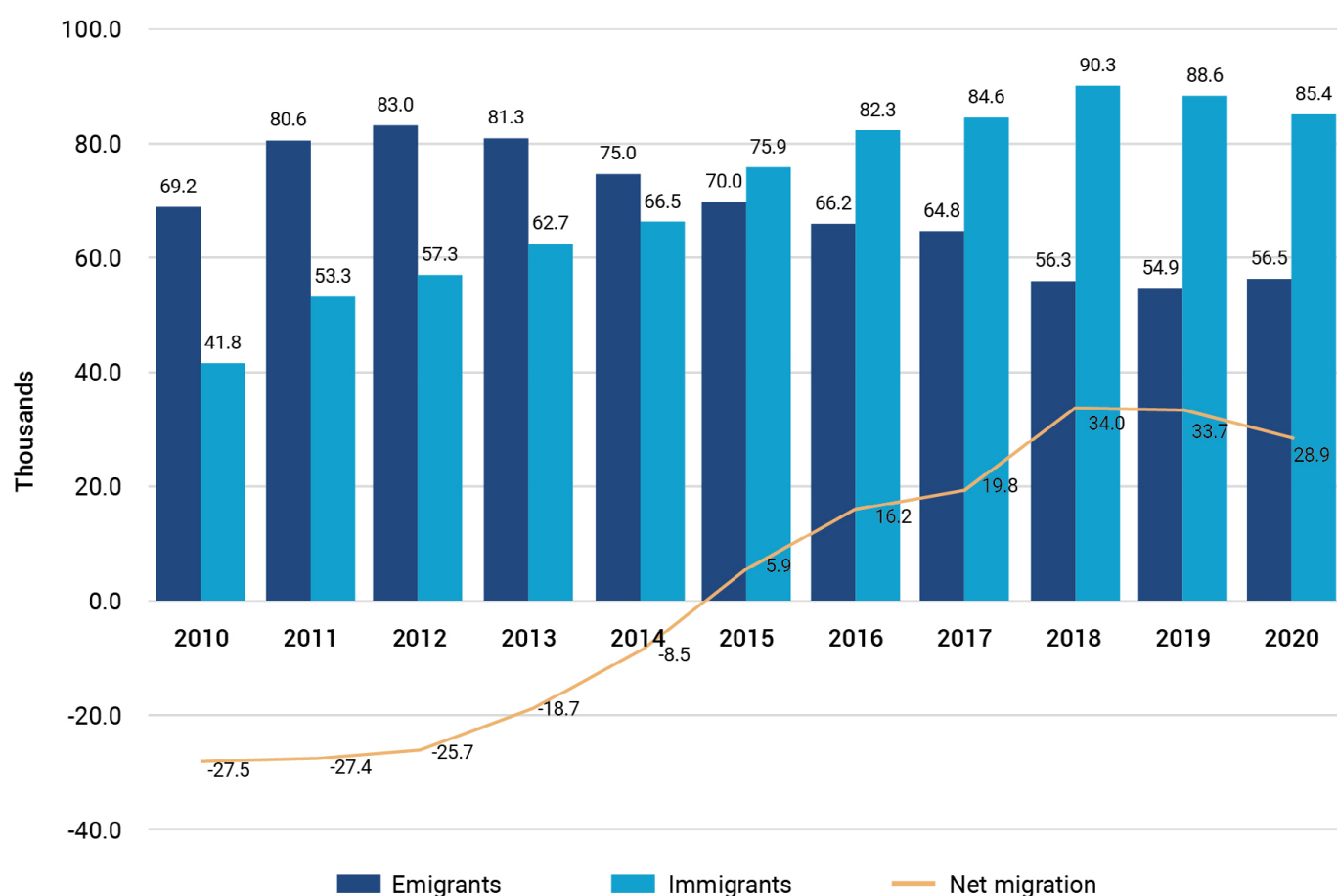
**Figure 3:11: Immigration, emigration and net migration for Ireland (1997-2008)**



Source: Martin Ruhs, and Emma Quinn, "Ireland: From Rapid Immigration to Recession" migrationpolicy.org. (Migration Policy Institute, March 2, 2017), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/ireland-rapid-immigration-recession>.

Note: Immigrants are defined as residents of Ireland who did not reside in the country on April 30th of the previous year

**Figure 3:12: Immigration, emigration and net migration for Ireland (2010-20)**



Source: Anne Sheridan, The Economic and Social Research Institute. Annual Report on Migration and Asylum" (ESRI, 2019.), <https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/SUSTAT102.pdf.3>

While statistical data on migrant workers in the agricultural sector is difficult to come by, broadly, the Irish sector employs 164,400 people, of which an estimated 60 per cent are migrants.<sup>123</sup> When visas were easier to access, migrants would frequently work on smaller agricultural farms and work in stables in Ireland.<sup>124</sup> Annually, Irish growers rely on three to four thousand seasonal workers from Europe to harvest Irish fruit and vegetable crops. An estimated 77 per cent of horticultural workers are foreign nationals.<sup>125</sup> Of this number, 56 per cent are from other EU countries, and 44 per cent are from non-EU countries.<sup>126</sup> Since asylum seekers have a limited right to work while their visa is processed, there is also an increased amount of participation in the meatpacking industry.<sup>127</sup> By 2020, the sector had an estimated 15,795 workers, of which 59 per cent were migrants. 56 per cent were from the EU and 44 per cent from outside it, and 21 per cent possessed employment permits.<sup>128</sup>

123 Central Statistics Office (CSO), August 29, 2019, <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/>.

124 Interview IE.5.

125 Niall Sargent, "Under Pressure: Industry urges state to open horticultural workforce to non-Eu workers." (The Journal, 2020), <https://www.thejournal.ie/reaping-the-harvest-pt3-5300669-Dec2020/>.

126 Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland." (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948\\_COVID-19\\_AND\\_NON-IRISH\\_NATIONALS\\_IN\\_IRELAND](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948_COVID-19_AND_NON-IRISH_NATIONALS_IN_IRELAND).

127 Interview IE.5.

128 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "Working to the Bone: The Experiences of Migrant Workers in the Meat Sector in Ireland". (MRCI, 2020), [https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report\\_Working-to-the-bone\\_final.pdf](https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report_Working-to-the-bone_final.pdf).

Ireland's broader immigration system is still skills-based and does not take labour market shortages into account. Recommendations on eligible categories of employment are made by an expert group that predicts future demand for skills. As a result, there are many ineligible categories of employment in the work permit system. In 2019, Ireland opened a pilot scheme for 50 dairy assistants and 500 horticulture worker permits. The pig and poultry farming sectors, inexplicably, were left out, while the meat processing sector was initially allocated 250 permits, subsequently increased to over 1,500.<sup>129</sup>

Only Irish and European Union citizens have an automatic right to live and work in Ireland. All other migrants require a work permit. For agricultural work, offering seasonal work is oftentimes necessary in order to meet the demands of the market. Until very recently, Ireland was an outlier in the European Union, as it did not grant seasonal employment permits in sectors such as fruit picking. In February 2021, legislation was introduced to enact such a provision to fill gaps in the agricultural labour market.

Central Africa, Brazil, the Balkans, Poland, Ukraine and India are the largest points of origin for migrants entering Ireland. Horticultural firms increasingly source labour from the European Economic Area (EEA) and beyond. However, permits may not provide a solution to the systematic issues within the industry and the negative impact of Brexit. As Irish farms continue to expand, and single farm workers become owners and employers, low pay, and low retention rates create further labour shortages.

Low pay in the agricultural sector "brings issues of competitiveness and problems in recruitment."<sup>130</sup> Brexit further jeopardises potential firm profits, especially for mushrooms, as the industry exports 80 per cent of its production to the United Kingdom.<sup>131</sup> Potential tariffs on goods and the effective elimination of the Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries policies – which together foster free trade across the borders of Ireland and with the United Kingdom – could cause further stagnation and reduction in wages for horticultural workers in the mushroom industry, which the Irish Farmers Association describe as having been "thrown into turmoil" with several businesses failing as a result.<sup>132</sup>

All the agricultural sectors discussed have undergone transformational structural changes over the past few decades. Their local workforces have moved away from agricultural jobs in favour of secondary and tertiary sector employment. At the same time, the globalisation and monopolistic consolidation of agricultural markets has meant that European farmers face greater competitive pressures and have less influence over the price of their produce. As a result, pressures to push down the costs of agricultural labour have persisted, underpinning the growing entry of migrant workers into the sector because they are cheaper to employ.

Although farmers' dependence on migrant workers varies by country and industry, the food and agriculture sector in all four case study countries would struggle to survive without access to cheap migrant labour, with migrants comprising significant parts of their workforces. Many work on a seasonal, temporary, or circular basis, and originate from a wide range of countries, spanning east, south and south-east Europe, north and sub-saharan Africa, south Asia and Latin America. TCNs occupy a growing share of migrant employment in agriculture, and in some countries, such as Greece and Spain, there is also a significant presence of irregular migrant workers in the sector. This diversity is reflected in the different recruitment practices through which migrants are employed, including private intermediate organisations; posting arrangements and bilateral labour migration agreements which see the state in each host country act as recruiter.

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129 Irish Farmers' Association, "Changes Needed to Farm Labour Permit Scheme Urgently." ife.ie. (Irish Farmers' Association (IFA), August 5, 2020), <https://www.ifa.ie/policy-areas/changes-needed-to-farm-labour-permit-scheme-urgently/>.

130 Ciaran Moran, "Farmers Face Labour Shortage as Poor Pay and Employment Law Breaches Plague Sector." (Farming Independent, January 4, 2019), <https://www.independent.ie/business/farming/agri-business/recruitment/farmers-face-labour-shortage-as-poor-pay-and-employment-law-breaches-plague-sector-37678012.html>.

131 Peter Murtagh, "Ireland's €120m Mushroom Industry in the Dark as Brexit Looms." *The Irish Times*. 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/ireland-s-120m-mushroom-industry-in-the-dark-as-brexit-looms-1.3777900>.

132 Niall Sargent and Maria Cheresheva, "Growing Pains: Fears for Migrant Workers Who Carry the Load of Ireland's Horticulture Boom," *TheJournal.ie* (The Journal, December 18, 2020), <https://www.thejournal.ie/reaping-harvest-pt1-5300738-Dec2020/>.

## 3.2 Working conditions

Agricultural migrant workers are some of the lowest paid and most exploited workers in the labour markets of the four countries examined. This section details widespread problematic practices and labour rights violations, including very long and physically demanding work shifts, lack of adequate remuneration due to violation of minimum wage regulation, failed remuneration for overtime and the non-payment of the last wage before return to home countries. Together with language barriers and misinformation, there is a general opacity in the payment system, against which workers struggle to take action. Further violations include lack of a written contract (or a contract in a language that the worker understands), unclear and excessive deductions for accommodation, food costs, working materials and clothing. It also highlights some exploitative practices used by employers, such as taking advantage of legal loopholes in migrant labour law; the role of the state in failing to provide adequate social protections in law (especially for irregular workers) and the dependence of many agricultural migrant workers on employers for accommodation and resident permits.

### Germany

Problematic working and living conditions are reported across the whole German agriculture sector. The recourse to a low-wage, flexible and exploitable migrant labour force and recurrent violations of labour rights should be understood, not only in terms of unscrupulous employers, but as symptomatic of the market tendencies already outlined above and the legal framework of short-term employment in agriculture.

The German agri-food market is characterised by enhanced competition and oligopolistic tendencies, with four big companies making up more than 85 per cent of the food retail market.<sup>133</sup> This leads to price wars and discount battles with relatively low prices for meat, dairy products, vegetables and fruit compared to the rest of the EU. As a result, domestic producers have limited leeway to increase prices on wholesale markets. The introduction of the minimum wage in agriculture has further reduced the profit margin for agri-food producers. In this context, most employers in agriculture tend to squeeze the cost of labour by lowering pay and working conditions, thereby violating workers' rights.

Employment in German agriculture is intensive and precarious. The harvest takes place in a short period of time with very long and physically demanding working shifts. Violation of the minimum wage is widespread due to lack of adequate remuneration through the use of piecework,<sup>134</sup> failure to pay overtime or the non-payment of the last wage before migrants return to their home countries. Together with language barriers and misinformation, the use of piecemeal remuneration creates a general opacity in the payment system, against which workers struggle to take action.

Other common practices used by employers include lack of a written contract (or contract in a language that the worker understands), unclear and excessive deductions for accommodation, food costs, working materials and clothing. Figure 3:13 shows the findings from a survey of seasonal workers' concerns about their labour rights in Lower Saxony.

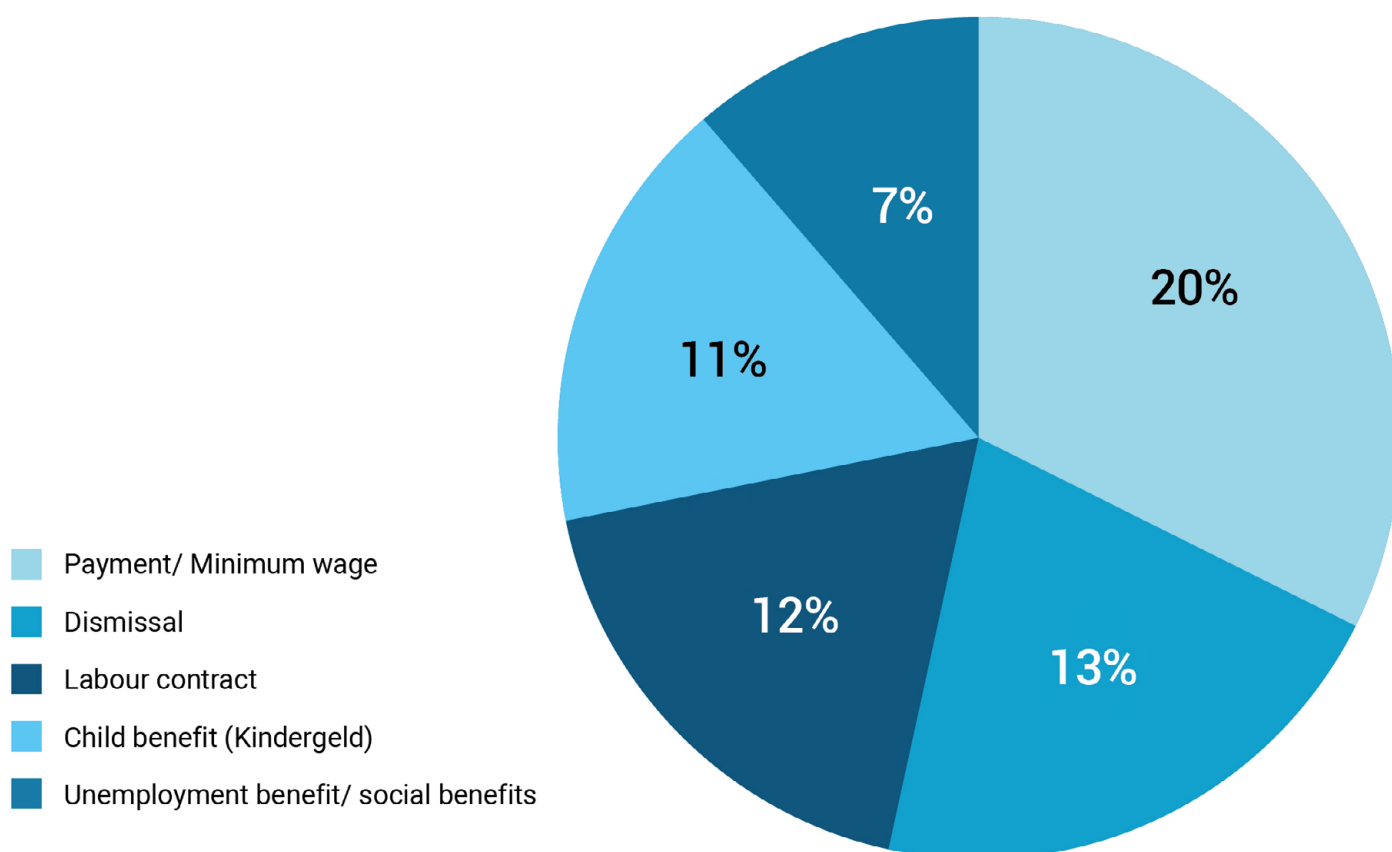
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133 Open Society Foundation, "Covid-19, Agri-Food Systems, and Migrant Labour. The Situation in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden" (Open Society Foundation, 2020), <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ccf241cc-89b2-4b44-a595-90bd77edab3d/covid19-agrifood-systems-and-migrant-labour-20200715.pdf>.

134 By stipulating a fixed wage for a determined amount of harvested goods.



**Figure 3:13 Most common topics raised in labour rights counselling of seasonal workers in Lower Saxony, Germany**



Source: DGB Niedersachsen 2020.<sup>135</sup>

It is common practice for migrant workers to be paid all at once, and in cash, at the end of their stay – even on their very last day, often under time pressure because of their imminent trip back to their country of origin. Employers may also only pay for a part of the work completed and the circumstances make it very hard for them to reclaim their unpaid wages.

Seasonal workers are largely recruited directly in their countries of origin by specialised agencies. These provide contact with their German employer, arrange transportation and accommodation, and take care of the bureaucratic process, for which some illegally charge fees to the worker rather than the employer. Workers employed in this way may work for the same farm over many seasons, conversely, larger companies experience high turnover. The type of harvest and working conditions play a role in this, with high turnover in the workforce harvesting asparagus, for example, but higher retention in viticulture, where better working conditions are reported.

While agencies are a powerful actor in recruitment in the agricultural sector, in most cases, contracts are concluded directly between the workers and the farms/companies, while posting work is not as common as it is, for example, in the care sector. Since 2018, the agricultural sector has officially been bound to the minimum wage in Germany, (€9.50 per hour in 2021). In practice, wages are largely paid by piecework

<sup>135</sup> DGB Niedersachsen, “Erntearbeit: Hohes Gesundheitsrisiko Für Eine Hand Voll Euro,” Erntearbeit: Hohes Gesundheitsrisiko für eine Hand voll Euro | DGB Niedersachsen (DGB, April 23, 2020), <https://niedersachsen.dgb.de/themen/++co++6b469f84-8527-11ea-b120-52540088cada>.

remuneration with the amount re-calculated and measured in working time. Employers use piecework to trick their employees, for example by making pay conditional on completing work which is de facto not realistically achievable during the given time or by simply disregarding total worked hours. In practice, breaches of the legal minimum wage are extremely common.

Problematic working and living conditions have also been reported in the German meat processing industry. In spring/summer 2020, there were several Covid-19 mass outbreaks in various industrial slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants across the country, where hygiene measures and contact restrictions had been largely disregarded. The increasing use of posted work and subcontracting, often with the involvement of employment agencies, is attributed to the pressures felt by employers from the new, increased competition on labour costs within both the European internal and global markets as a means of hiring cheap labour while circumventing relevant EU and national legislation. Migrant workers are significantly overrepresented in posted work organised through temporary agencies and employee leasing.<sup>136</sup>

Scandals and sub-standard labour conditions - known in the sector long before the pandemic – led to a sector specific collective bargaining agreement in 2017, which established agreed minimum wages specifically for the meat industry, also binding subcontracting firms outside of Germany.<sup>137</sup> From 1st January 2021, as a result of union lobbying, subcontracting was banned from the meat industry; time limits and maximum worker numbers were implemented in temporary and contract work and the measurement of electronic working time made mandatory. Whether these legislative changes will bring long term improvement in the sector remains to be seen.

Abusive and exploitative labour practices in the meat processing industry, with the widespread use of posted work and subcontracting, have been enabled by a grey zone of gaps and shortcomings in Germany's labour laws that do not incorporate work inspections. Inspections by the main enforcement authority responsible for combating undeclared work and illegal employment (*Finanzkontrolle Schwarzarbeit*) concentrates on other sectors and its focus is on ensuring that social security contributions are paid by employers rather than regulating workers' rights. Even if a labour right violation is identified during routine checks, this does not automatically lead to legal proceedings.

Migrant workers have to resort to individual legal action. Language barriers, high levels of mobility, as well as fear of repercussions, make legal enforcement a viable option in only a very few cases. Following such individual action, there have been accounts of agencies banning families or even whole villages from making new referrals to work with them.<sup>138</sup> Prosecutions are also difficult because migrant workers leave after the season's work and then tend not to be available as victims or witnesses in subsequent proceedings. If a worker succeeds in filing a complaint against their employer, the juridical steps that follow are complicated and designed for workers who can benefit from union membership, but that act against individuals filing legal actions (e.g. a translator should be guaranteed and paid by the migrant worker even when they have won the case). By contrast, abusive employers face a vastly reduced risk following trials for breach of employment law. Even if found guilty, they pay no legal proceeding costs or fines. The non-paid loan merely has to be retrospectively paid.

The nature of agricultural seasonal work therefore creates a fertile environment for abusive practices. What is more, the relative 'invisibility' of the agricultural sector, is in itself a risk factor for abuse, as the absence of effective social control enhances the power imbalance between employers and workers.

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136 DGB Bildungswerk (DGB Education Centre), "Forum Migration Juni 2021" (Forum Migration, 2021), <https://www.dgb-bildungswerk.de/forum-migration-juni-2021>.

137 Open Society Foundation, "Covid-19, Agri-Food Systems, and Migrant Labour. The Situation in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden" (Open Society Foundation, 2020), <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ccf241cc-89b2-4b44-a595-90bd77edab3d/covid19-agrifood-systems-and-migrant-labour-20200715.pdf>.

138 Peco-Institut e.V., "*Flexible-Insecure – Wanderarbeit in der Landwirtschaft. Werkstattbericht (Flexible-Insecure - Migrant Work in Agriculture. Workshop report)*" (Peco-Institut, 2017), [https://www.peco-ev.de/docs/Flexi\\_Insecure\\_Web.pdf](https://www.peco-ev.de/docs/Flexi_Insecure_Web.pdf).

## Ireland

Agricultural workers in Ireland face similar abusive and exploitative labour practices. Gort Resource Centre,<sup>139</sup> an NGO providing free and accessible social services to migrant workers, described how workers are frequently hired on the day they are needed, with no contract, subsequently driven to their workplace with no prior knowledge of its location; work excessively long hours and are paid cash at the end of the day which amounts to less than the minimum wage. Taking such jobs are a last resort for survival for migrants with few employment options and who cannot access a PPS number<sup>140</sup> from the government or receive document status. This vulnerability leaves them susceptible to abuse and maltreatment by farmers and their employers.<sup>141</sup>

It is difficult for migrant workers to leave jobs, even when their pay and conditions are poor. They may feel obligated to stay with that employer because they are anxious about their immigration status and potentially unaware of their rights and particularly - in the case of non-EU migrants - when that employer is listed on their work permit.<sup>142</sup> In 2017, the Department of Agriculture stated that “removing workers from the ineligible list would not resolve the structural issues which have resulted in the current labour deficit,” specifically citing the low paid, part-time nature of the work.<sup>143</sup>

Migrant workers employed in the Irish meat packing industry also face abusive and exploitative working conditions. They are subject to “dirty, difficult, and dangerous work” and employers practice “poor safety and health protocols” and show “cavalier disregard” for workers.<sup>144</sup> For example, sick employees working on meat processing lines have been refused permission to recover at home because the product was “perishable.”<sup>145</sup> Many believe this vicious labour cycle to be a “modern day form of slavery.”<sup>146</sup> In 2021, an investigation into meat-packing plants found that many workers, afraid of speaking out or being silenced and in fear of retribution or retaliation, are forced to fake identities from criminal enterprises before being offered employment by firms. Workplace conditions, with workers in close proximity and lack of sick pay and protections, have only exacerbated the effects of Covid-19 for workers in the plants, which is discussed further on in the report.

It is estimated that out of the 15,000 workers that the industry employs, less than 40 per cent are unionised. Additionally, only 10-20 per cent of meat processing workers are allocated sick pay, even when they are ill or injured on the job,<sup>147</sup> and only 8 per cent of Irish meat processing workers hold some form of social insurance, significantly lower than the EU average of 20 per cent.

In an investigation by the Cork Operative Butchers, a Branch of the Independent Workers Union found that several employment agencies hiring migrant workers in meat packing plants in Munster, had declared them to be working in Poland, in order to evade Irish revenue. In a 2020 interview with The Irish Times, a union representative stated that “For many years, all these workers had no annual leave, no right to illness benefit, child allowance etc, had no Personal Public Service numbers, and were de facto invisible in Ireland.”<sup>148</sup>

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139 Gort Resource Center, “The Gort Resource Centre - Who Are We?” Gort Resource Centre, accessed November 17, 2021, <http://www.gortfrc.com/>.

140 A Personal Public Service (PPS) Number is a unique reference number that helps you access social welfare benefits, public services and information in Ireland.

141 Interview IE.4.

142 Houses of the Oireachtas, “Special Committee on Covid-19 Response debate” (2020), [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/special\\_committee\\_on\\_covid-19\\_response/2020-08-13/3/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/special_committee_on_covid-19_response/2020-08-13/3/).

143 Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Freedom and Contributed by Niall Sargent, “Labour/Skills Demand in the Agricultural Sector,” DocumentCloud, October 24, 2017, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20417710-foi-2018-185-documents#document/p4>.

144 Interview IE.5.

145 Interview IE.17.

146 “SIPTU Calls on Agricultural Minister to Respond to Meat Industry Revelations,” 2021. Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU). [https://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2019/featurednews/fullstory\\_22398\\_en.html](https://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2019/featurednews/fullstory_22398_en.html).

147 Interviews IE.17 and IE.19.

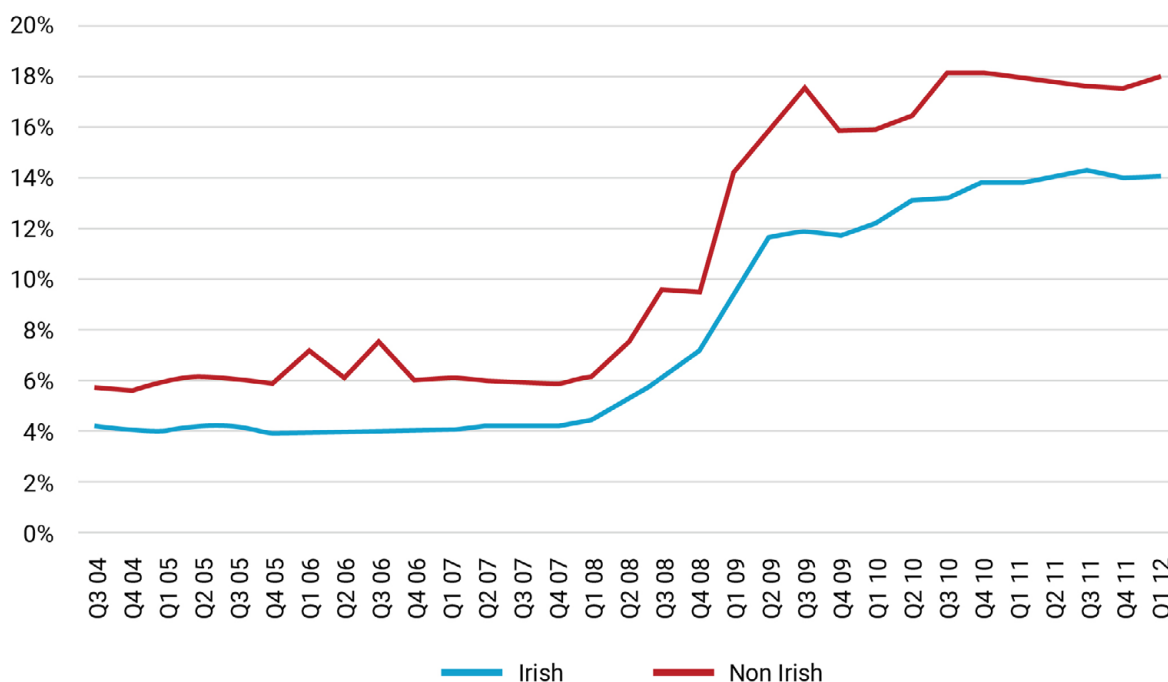
148 Martin Wall, The Irish Times, “Overseas meat plant workers cheated out of social security rights” (The Irish Times 30.07.2021), <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/overseas-meat-plant-workers-cheated-out-of-social-security->

Amongst respondents to a MRCI survey of 121 meat processing plant workers, 62 per cent had worked in the sector for four years or less, 21 per cent between 5 and 15 years, and 17 per cent for more than 15 years.<sup>149</sup> The majority did not belong to a trade union but 60 per cent reported injury on the job, 62 per cent believed they had not had enough training to do their jobs, more than half did not know who their health and safety officer was, over 40 per cent either did not do the work stated in their contract, did not know if they had a contract, or did not have a contract at all, and the majority worked more than 40 hours a week and did not receive bonuses. The survey also found consistent racism and discrimination and bullying. One respondent said that he suffered harsher discrimination because he was undocumented - he was paid less than the minimum wage and forced to do extra work.

The migrant workforce in Ireland experiences the most significant difference in numbers unemployed pre and post-recession (see Figure 3:14). They tend to be the most affected because they have less secure contracts and are later to arrive in the labour market. These conditions allow for a first in, first out approach. Employers find it easy to terminate their employment as they have little or no protection.

Despite these widespread structural problems with the sector, there are examples of initiatives such as Teagasc’s The People in Dairy project where turnover is lower when employees “obtained higher than the average pay rates in industry, flexible work hours, limited weekend hours and very long shifts, training and development opportunities, feedback, appreciation for a job well done, individual attention to career development and mentoring and an enjoyable work environment with good facilities.”<sup>150</sup> Such firms are profit-making while also retaining their employees, demonstrating that greater investment in human capital can be beneficial.

**Figure 3:14 Unemployment rates for Irish and non-Irish nationals Pre- and Post-financial Crisis (2004-2012)**



Source: *Quarterly National Household Survey Quarter 1 2012*. CSO, June 7, 2012.<sup>151</sup>

[rights-1.4329467.](#)

149 MRCI (2020) Working to the Bones: [https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report\\_Working-to-the-bone\\_final.pdf](https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report_Working-to-the-bone_final.pdf)

150 Ciaran Moran, “Farmers Face Labour Shortage as Poor Pay and Employment Law Breaches Plague Sector.” (Farming Independent, January 4, 2019), <https://www.independent.ie/business/farming/agri-business/recruitment/farmers-face-labour-shortage-as-poor-pay-and-employment-law-breaches-plague-sector-37678012.html>.

151 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/archive/releasearchive2005/>

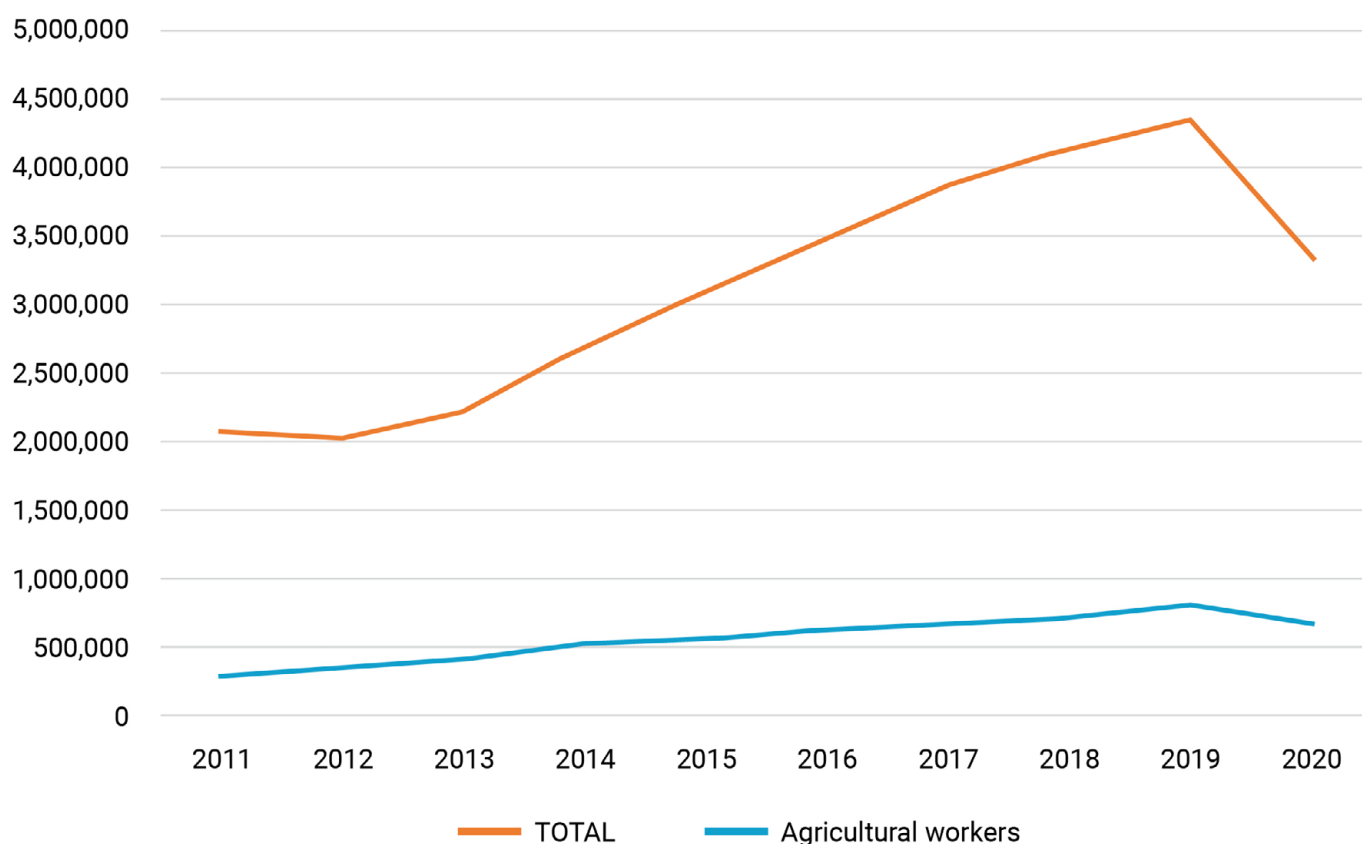
## Spain

Despite no less than 63 agricultural collective bargaining agreements, labour fraud and rights violations frequently occur in the Spanish agricultural sector. These include the extension of the working day beyond stipulated hours; underpaying hours worked with a consequent loss of unemployment benefit rights; paying less than agreed in the collective bargaining agreement or the minimum wage; disregard for occupational health and safety, piecework, unpaid overtime and the illegal transfer of workers from one employer to another. Contracts are not required for jobs lasting less than 26 days. Therefore, most casual contracts are verbal, which makes workers completely vulnerable to employer non-compliance.

Many non-EU immigrants arrive without visas, mainly from Morocco and sub-Saharan African countries and survive in the underground agricultural economy, often working in harvests until they manage to obtain their first residency permit. This can take years due to Spain's immigration legislation, which in line with EC directives, is extremely restrictive.

Intermediary companies, as in Germany, also have a significant role in recruiting and hiring seasonal workers, many of whom are Romanian and Bulgarian, signing "provision of labour" contracts with agricultural producers that allow them to violate the law, making deductions from workers' wages and paying salaries below those stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement, underpaying social security contributions, or imposing abusive working hours as evidenced by the growing number of violations and abuses, including human trafficking, that have been detected by the Labour Inspection (*Inspección de Trabajo*) and Civil Guard (*Guardia Civil*). Figure 3:15 shows the extent to which the agricultural sector relies on the hiring of temporary workers through intermediary agencies.

**Figure 3:15: Contracts for the provision of agricultural workers in Spain, (2011-2019)**



Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), "Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social." (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social \* actualizado a 21 - Octubre - 2021 \*. Accessed October 31, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

In 1999, the system of collective management of hiring at origin (GECCO in Spanish) was implemented, allowing temporary hiring (maximum eight months) of non-EU workers residing in countries with which Spain has signed immigration collaboration agreements. This system has become increasingly important in Huelva for strawberry harvesting and planting, where producers have always opted to hire women, first from Eastern Europe (Romanian and Polish) and after 2006, when those countries joined the European Union, from Morocco. 14,000 Moroccan seasonal workers, most of them employed in previous harvests, were hired this way in 2020-21.

Employer representatives travel to those countries to hire seasonal workers in collaboration with the labour authorities there. They only hire women who are between 18 and 40 years old, married (or widowed or divorced but never single), have dependent children under 14 years old, and live in rural areas. This selection process openly violates the Spanish constitution, which prohibits “discrimination on the grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance” (art. 14<sup>152</sup>) and expressly states that “in no case may there be discrimination on the grounds of sex in the workplace.” (art. 35.1).<sup>153</sup>

Legislation obliges employers to book and pay for workers’ outbound trips, plus basic accommodation for the duration of the contract. For their part, immigrants are only authorised to work for one specific employer and undertake to return to their country at the end of the campaign. If they fail to do so they will lose the right to apply for work permits for the following three years.

Rates of both poverty and illiteracy among female Moroccan seasonal workers is very high, most do not speak Spanish, and the vast majority are not accustomed to travelling alone so they hardly ever leave the farms. In this way, employers ensure that they have abundant, cheap, submissive, flexible, and disciplined labour in their fields for the duration of the harvest who will return to Morocco at the end of the contract.

The authorities have presented circular migration as an example of best practice and have even received financial aid from the European Union. However, this type of migration is increasingly being called into question, due to its discriminatory system of candidate recruitment, the social isolation that workers are subjected to, without transportation and living far from local communities; the overcrowding and poor conditions of accommodation, the proliferation of breaches of contract and labour abuses. There has also been an increase in complaints of degrading and sexist treatment and sexual abuse by foremen, who are usually Moroccan men.<sup>154</sup>

As a reaction to a wave of complaints of sexual and labour abuse by seasonal workers in the spring of 2018, which gained extensive national and international media coverage,<sup>155</sup> the collective bargaining agreement for agricultural work in Huelva was renegotiated and incorporated a protocol to prevent labour and sexual harassment and discriminatory treatment. It includes a provision for training foremen and hiring intercultural mediators to work with seasonal workers offering advice and support in areas such as healthcare, banking or organising travel.<sup>156</sup> Interfresa,<sup>157</sup> an interprofessional agri-food organisation, which brings together the main employers in the strawberry sector, also formulated an ethical labour and social responsibility plan in the same year which included the creation of these mediator positions. After several years in operation,

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152 Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, “The Spanish Constitution: Passed by the Cortes Generales in Plenary Meetings of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate Held on October 31, 1978” p.11 (December 6, 1978), <https://www.boe.es/legislacion/documentos/ConstitucionINGLES.pdf>.

153 Ibid p. 16.

154 Women’s Link Worldwide, “Moroccan Seasonal Workers in Huelva’s Agriculture: Working and Living Conditions of Female Workers Hired at Origin” (Women’s Link Worldwide, 2018), <https://www.womenslinkworldwide.org/en/files/3118/executive-report-moroccan-women-working-in-the-strawberries-farms-of-huelva-province.pdf>.

155 El País: [https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/06/07/mujeres/1528396330\\_755399.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/06/07/mujeres/1528396330_755399.html); ElDiario.es: [https://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/en-abierto/abusos-explotacion-campo-espanol-tolerancia\\_132\\_2037460.html](https://www.eldiario.es/andalucia/en-abierto/abusos-explotacion-campo-espanol-tolerancia_132_2037460.html); El Mundo: <https://www.elmundo.es/andalucia/2018/08/13/5b71c281e5fdea0d0c8b45f3.html>

156 [https://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Laboral/631220-convenio-colectivo-del-campo-de-la-provincia-huelva-2018-2020-r-economia.html](https://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Laboral/631220-convenio-colectivo-del-campo-de-la-provincia-huelva-2018-2020-r-economia.html)

157 <https://www.interfresa.com/origen/>

positive results from these initiatives have contributed to a climate of greater confidence and security for Moroccan seasonal workers. However, the ability for these intermediaries to detect abuses is limited as they are employed by the same organisations who have recruited the seasonal workers.

Employers argue that illegal practices are anecdotal and that the majority of them comply with both the law and collective bargaining agreements. They nevertheless reject any initiative by state labour authorities to strengthen the regulatory force of labour inspections to detect possible labour law infractions, workers' rights violations, and criminal practices of labour exploitation.

While agricultural wages are among the lowest in the Spanish economy, there have been notable minimum wage hikes since 2019 (31.1 per cent in three years).<sup>158</sup> The actual minimum wage, at 7.55 euros per hour, is a significant improvement in wages for farm labourers and seasonal workers. Employers have hotly contested the increase, arguing that it reduces their already small profit margins, could lead to the closure of small farms and growth in the black economy. They use various tactics to avoid incorporating this wage increase into collective bargaining agreements, including delaying renegotiation with unions, and obfuscating on how to calculate the wage increases.

### Greece

As in Germany and Spain, agricultural labour demand in Greece peaks during harvesting season. Labour shortages are similarly met by circular movements of migrant labourers from various countries outside the EU. Inter-regional, transnational and/or cross-country movements of migrants are designed and implemented for periods up to six months. A number of bilateral agreements have facilitated this seasonal/circular movement with Albania (Law 2482/1997), Bulgaria (Law 2407/1996) and Egypt (Law 1453/1984).

A significant share of migrant workers in Greece are highly educated and over-educated for the jobs they are doing.<sup>159</sup> 22.7 per cent of migrant agricultural workers have a secondary education compared to 16.2 per cent of their Greek peers while 2.7 per cent have a tertiary education compared to 1.8 per cent respectively.<sup>160</sup> This wasted human capital disrupts the functioning of the labour market as its labour is not being fully utilised.<sup>161</sup> The underuse of migrants' skills and experience, and their risk of being trapped in the most labour intensive segments of the agricultural sector, also increases their precariousness and marginalisation.<sup>162,163</sup> At the same time, their country of origin experiences brain drain as a part of its potential labour force migrates to another country.

The difficult and precarious working and living conditions of unskilled migrants working in the agricultural sector were sporadically discussed pre-crisis in the public arena. In 2008, the demonstration of migrant workers in Manolada, a small village in western Greece at the centre of strawberry cultivation, demanding an increase of their daily wage, attracted the attention of the public and the media (Papadopoulos & Fratsea 2017a). The 'Manolada incident' was brought into public attention in March 2008, thanks to reporting by a national newspaper.<sup>164</sup>

The media began to draw attention to the region because of a series of local rallies by migrant workers,

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158 <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/SMI/index.htm>

159 Gabriella Lazaridis and Maria Koumandraki, "Albanian Migration to Greece: Patterns and Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion in the Labour Market". *European Societies*, 9 no. 1 (2007) 91-111.; Theodore Lianos, "Brain Drain and Brain Loss: Immigrants to Greece". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 no. (2007) 129-140.

160 Hellenic Statistical Authority, "El Stat," Statistics, 2001, <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SAM05/2001>.

161 Theodore P. Lianos, "Brain Drain and Brain Loss: Immigrants to Greece". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 no. (2007) 129-140.

162 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos and Loukia-Maria Fratsea "Deciphering African Migration in Greece during the Crisis: Between Mobility, Agency and Integration". *Greek Sociological Review*, No 8. (2021) (In Greek).

163 Theodore P. Lianos, Alexander H. Sarris, and Louka T. Katseli, "Illegal Immigration and Local Labour Markets: The Case of Northern Greece." *International Migration* 34, no. 3 (1996): 449-84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.1996.tb00537.x>.

164 *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (Sunday Freepress) (30.3.2008).

primarily from Bangladesh but also from Balkan countries. These protests represented a watershed moment in the local migrant labour force's political history; realised by migrants labouring in Manolada's strawberry fields while living in deplorable conditions. Hundreds of migrant labourers were required to work long hours and under hard conditions for less than the minimum wage, while paying their employers rents to live in substandard housing, as exposed by media coverage of the events.

This mainly irregular, flexible, and inexpensive labour force was reportedly subjected to a regime of coercion and terror, which included limits on their mobility. This media portrayal of the working and living conditions in Manolada's strawberry fields garnered public attention and, as a result, was debated in the Hellenic Parliament.<sup>165</sup> In 2013, social clashes in Manolada escalated once more. Several Bangladeshi migrants, the majority of whom lacked a residence permit, went on strike three times to demand payment from their employers – who withheld their wages until the end of the harvest. According to the employees' claims, their employers failed to pay their wages—€150,000 over six months—and instead hired additional Bangladeshi migrants to work in the fields two days later.

When a group of workers sought payment from their bosses, one of the armed men opened fire, seriously wounding many of them. Four were detained as a result of this incident: a farm owner and three supervisors. Unsurprisingly, the tragedy made headlines throughout the world, with major news organisations dedicating significant coverage to the incident.

The Manolada clashes prompted legal action, which ended four years later in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).<sup>166</sup> In 2017, the ECtHR ruled that there had been a violation of Article 4 §2 of the Convention (which prohibits forced or compulsory labour) and that the petitioners, 42 Bangladeshi employees, had not received adequate protection from the Greek government.<sup>167,168,169</sup> The ruling is important in having recognised the particular vulnerability of migrant workers, especially those who lack proper documentation (such as residence or work permits) and who, as a result of their irregular status and the consequent risk of arrest, detention, and expulsion,<sup>170</sup> are more susceptible to threats, exploitation, and abuse by employers.<sup>171</sup> Their irregular status and the ensuing relevant vulnerability effectively remove the option of leaving exploitative working relationships or moving anywhere within or outside the host country.

The court further noted that there was a positive obligation on states<sup>172</sup> to take measures to prevent forced labour (including human trafficking), “to protect the victims, to conduct an effective investigation into the offences and to punish those responsible for the trafficking.” In its interpretation of the notion of forced labour and its understanding of worker vulnerability and its effects, the significance of the ruling extends beyond Greece, the agricultural sector or migrant workers as such.<sup>173</sup>

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165 Papadopoulos et al. 2018.

166 The application that instigated the process was submitted on 8 May 2013. See *Chowdury and Others v. Greece*, no. 21884/15, § 12, 30 March 2017.

167 The four individuals in question, two employers, the guard who opened fire and an armed overseer, faced criminal trials before Greek courts. They were acquitted of human trafficking on the basis of the argument that workers were not deprived of their freedom of movement and were in a position to change the conditions by leaving their jobs to seek other employment. Before the ECtHR the Greek government reiterated those points arguing additionally that there had been no mental or physical coercion against the workers, as Art.4(2) ECHR requires. The European Court of Human Rights, however, refuted that restriction of freedom of movement is a prerequisite for a situation to be characterised as forced labour or even human trafficking.

168 *Chowdury and Others v. Greece*, no. 21884/15, 30 March 2017.

169 For a detailed timeline of major events regarding 'Manolada', in addition to the facts outlined in *Chowdury and Others v Greece*, see Papadopoulos et al. 2018.

170 *Chowdury and Others v. Greece*, no. 21884/15, 30 March 2017, paras. 95 and 97.

171 *ibid.*, para.96.

172 *ibid.*, paras. 87-89 and 103-104.

173 *Inter alia*, see *Vladislava Stoyanova*, *Sweet Taste with Bitter Roots: Forced Labour and Chowdury and Others v Greece* (2018) E.H.R.L.R. 67-75; *Vladislava Stoyanova*, 'European Court of Human Rights and the Right Not to Be Subjected to Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking' in *J. Winterdyk, J. Jones (eds) The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2020), 1393-1407; *Conny Rijken*, 'When Bad Labour Conditions Become Exploitation Lessons Learnt from the Chowdury Case' in *C.Rijken & Tesseltje de Lange, Towards a Decent Labour Market for Low-Waged Migrant Workers* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2018), 190; *Eleni Dionysopoulou*, 'Protecting Labour Rights of Third Country Nationals Unlawfully



In the years following the Manolada incidents, the more progressive media reported on migrant worker exploitation, precarious employment and living conditions in different regions in Greece. In many cases, the media used the word 'Manolada' to denote an intensive agricultural regime where migrant labour was exploited.<sup>174</sup> It became a shortcut for migrant labour precarity and flagged condemnation of intensive manual labour, inhumane working conditions, labour trafficking and informal employment. Moreover, it became a symbolic example of a production 'hotspot' and 'special economic zone' as highlighted during the economic crisis. However, the dominant narrative in mainstream Greek media, unfortunately, has been largely anything but positive towards migrant and immigrant workers. Under-reporting in major media outlets, including in the majority of mainstream media, is characteristic even in blatant cases of abuse, such as in Manolada.<sup>175</sup>

Exploitation of migrant workers is only part of the story. Their working conditions are exacerbated by legal regulation. Payment and social security, for example, are not regulated in the same way as typical employment. Migrants are usually paid through a service voucher scheme (*ergosimo*). This is not an employment contract but a payment method, introduced in 2010 to pay wages and social security contributions to occasionally employed workers in specific sectors.<sup>176</sup>

Consequently, migrant workers' legal rights to live and work in Greece are effectively 'tied' to an employer who can hire them to work in the farm for a period of six months at a time and then repeat the practice indefinitely. Rather than guaranteeing the 'regularisation' of migrant workers and their respective right to reside (which ought to be complemented by the opportunity to socially integrate) independent of a specific employment contract, this system essentially presupposes 'irregularity.' It disconnects the right to work from the right to lawfully reside in the host country and has therefore perpetuated and deepened the discriminatory fragmentation of labour regimes based on migration status.

What is more, local authorities can set an overall cap on migrant work and residency permits. This incentivises some farmers not to pay all the workers they have employed through the *ergosimo* scheme but instead choose to pay one 'trusted' worker (usually one who has a residence permit already) who then pays the others (those in semi-legality status). The farmer then avoids any transaction with irregular migrants and associated bureaucratic difficulties. This practice not only causes further uncertainty, as the onus of dealing with the relevant authorities would fall on a migrant worker, but also potential for arbitrariness and abuse of power among migrants. In 2021, further legislative changes have left 'irregular' seasonal workers in a legal vacuum, in essence without legal protection. It nevertheless presents a perfect example of bad and ineffective regulatory practice incompatible with fundamental rule of law principles, including that of legal certainty.

### 3.3 Living conditions and social rights

This section traces agricultural migrant workers' experience of social rights and protections in our four case study countries. Combined with draconian rules for undocumented migrant workers, social security legislation and regulations at the state-level create opportunities for basic rights to be denied; including in the inadequate housing conditions that migrant workers experience.

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Residing in Greece' (2018) *EErgD* 77(7) 837-864 (in Greek).

174 Articles such as 'Greece's other Manoladas' (*Avgi* newspaper, 28/4/2013), 'Patras experiences its own Manolada' (*Efimerida ton Syntakton* newspaper, 17/3/2015) or even more recently 'Manolada of Pieria [in Northern Greece] is a center of spread of the coronavirus' (*Efimerida ton Syntakton* newspaper, 15/6/2021).

175 See inter alia Dimitra Milioni & Konstantinos Vadratsikas, 'The (golden) dawn of audiences? Assessing the audience empowerment thesis through a framing analysis of immigration in the Greek media' (2016) *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture* 7(1) 59-81. See also Salvatore Coluccello & Lefteris Kretsos, 'Irregular Migration, Xenophobia and the Economic Crisis in Greece' in S. Massey, R. Coluccello (eds) *Eurafrican Migration: Legal, Economic and Social Responses to Irregular Migration* (Palgrave Pivot, London 2015) 88-104.

176 Kapsalis, Apostolos. "Review of the 'Ergosimo' Service Voucher System in Greece", Report submitted to the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission, May 2018.

## Germany

In Germany, there is no obligation for migrant workers and employers to pay social security contributions in jobs where they are employed for 70 days or less and the job is not their main source of income. In practice, this condition is hard to prove and experts assume that in a significant number of cases, seasonal harvest work is, in fact, the main source of income for migrant workers, and, as such, contributions should be made.

In making no contribution, workers miss out on their potential right to a pension in Germany which has negative consequences for their access to healthcare in the event of illness or accident. In the best case scenario, employers provide private health insurance valid for the duration of their employment in the country, or they rely on the health insurance of their home countries (if available). Under these conditions, it is not uncommon to experience barriers in accessing the health care system, especially in the case of costly treatments.

While some have adequate living standards, substandard living conditions for seasonal workers are a structural feature of the German agricultural sector, as they are all over Europe.<sup>177</sup> It is common for employers to provide workers' accommodation as well as their meals. In most cases, they are housed in inadequate, overcrowded and unhealthy containers or makeshift housing next to or directly on the working site. Although convenient for reaching the fields, this increases their isolation from everyone but their fellow workers and their employer. Lack of external contact, together with abuses such as employers withholding passports, reinforces their dependency on their employers and/or the recruitment agency, creating favourable further conditions for exploitation and hindering outreach from civil society, whether from the local community, NGOs, unions or labour rights counsellors.

## Ireland

Discrimination and barriers to inclusion have led to communities of migrant workers clustered throughout Ireland. Approximately 27 per cent of those on the housing waiting list are migrants who are living in temporary accommodation such as homeless shelters and hotels.<sup>178</sup>

Migrants from non-EU countries are more than twice as likely to live in overcrowded conditions and Black migrants are 3.5 times more likely to encounter discrimination than White Irish people.<sup>179,180</sup> Migrants may also lack knowledge about their entitlements and housing rights. The right to adequate housing, as protected under ESC rights treaties, establishes a right to adequate shelter and accommodation, rights to security of tenure, housing that is habitable, safe, protects from the elements and from disease and provides adequate space; accessible to those entitled to it; and located to allow access to employment, health-care services, schools, child-care centres and other social facilities.<sup>181</sup> However, accommodation for migrants in Ireland can be in direct violation of these rights. Interviews for this report indicated that rising rent prices have left some migrants with no choice but to live in overpopulated, inadequate housing, which can be distant from their place of work.<sup>182</sup> For women in particular, who rely on public transportation, this distance can be difficult.

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177 Open Society Foundation, "Covid-19, Agri-Food Systems, and Migrant Labour. The Situation in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden" (Open Society Foundation, 2020), <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ccf241cc-89b2-4b44-a595-90bd77edab3d/covid19-agrifood-systems-and-migrant-labour-20200715.pdf>.

178 John Kilraine, "Preparation over ethnic diversity in inner city flats needed – CAN." RTÉ, February 27, 2016. <https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2019/0227/1033278-inner-city-flat-complexes/>

179 Alan Barrett, Frances McGinnity, and Emma Quinn, *Monitoring Report on Integration 2016* (Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute, 2017). The authors add, however, that overcrowded living is significantly less common in Ireland than it is in the rest of the EU.

180 Raffaele Grotti, Helen Russell, Éamonn Fahey, Bertrand Maître, "Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland" (The Economic and Social Research Institute, 2018): 89, <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/Discrimination-and-Inequality-in-Housing-in-Ireland..pdf>

181 See for example, UN Habitat Fact Sheet No.21: [https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21\\_rev\\_1\\_housing\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21_rev_1_housing_en.pdf)

182 Interview IE.17.

## Spain

In Spain, 54.2 per cent of TCNs and 46 per cent of EU citizens are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, more than double that of the local population (21.7 per cent).<sup>183</sup> The greater relative vulnerability of migrants is explained by their large presence in basic occupations and low-wage sectors and by their higher incidence of underemployment, temporary employment, and unemployment. The vast majority of migrant agricultural workers are only employed on a casual basis. Throughout the year, they move from one farm to another and to different areas of the province or region, or to the seasonal campaigns of the agricultural regions in the north of the country, where the shortage of local labour is greater (internal seasonal migration). It is difficult to find decent and affordable accommodation and most collective bargaining agreements do not require employers to provide it. Getting to work requires a long daily trip, usually by public transport, which, combined with long and hard-working hours, leaves little time for activities other than eating and sleeping.

When there is no work in the fields, they supplement their income with sporadic informal jobs in construction or in domestic service. They often live in chronic poverty and social exclusion, experiencing a range of obstacles such as language barriers, difficulties accessing the internet, and a lack of knowledge about how to renew work permits, access public health services or apply for social assistance.

Moroccans, Romanians, Ecuadorians, and Sub-Saharan Africans occupy a prominent place in this vulnerable group. For these undocumented non-EU seasonal workers, current immigration regulations place them in even more acute economic and social vulnerability. Migrant workers survive working informally in the harvests until they manage to obtain their first residency permit. However, that is a drawn out and demanding process in which they are required to: 1) prove, by means of being registered in the Spanish census, that they have been continuously resident in Spain for at least three years; 2) sign an employment contract with an employer for at least one year; and 3) have direct family ties with other foreign residents or with Spaniards or, failing that, present a report documenting their efforts to integrate into society. This is issued by their local authority and takes into account the applicant's progress learning the official language, his or her degree of integration into the community (e.g. use of municipal public services, membership of associations, interaction with the neighbourhood and regular attendance at 'cultural insertion' programmes). Such demands force them to work in the informal economy or 'rent' papers from other immigrants to work under contract for at least three years, during which time they are also required to make time to integrate socially and, at the end of this period, obtain a one-year job offer from an employer.

Lack of decent housing in rural areas during the harvest is a major problem. It is common for employers to provide non-EU workers, employed through the GECCO system, with accommodation in facilities (often containers) next to or directly on the working site. A large number end up living in abandoned farmhouses, buildings, sheds, and greenhouses or in self-built shacks, which do not comply with minimum housing or public health standards. Illegal settlements, without basic amenities and separated from towns, are becoming increasingly widespread. Some house a total of more than 100,000 people, especially in the Andalusian provinces of Huelva and Almeria, where agricultural harvests take place all year round. Their inhabitants are mostly young Moroccan and sub-Saharan men (from Senegal, Ghana, Mali, and the Ivory Coast, among other nationalities), some of whom have unresolved legal status, but others who have legal contracts, are paid on time, but are still unable to rent housing.<sup>184</sup> Highly likely to suffer both labour exploitation and financial exclusion, they also face enormous difficulties accessing public health services and social assistance.

In many municipalities, local authorities are reluctant to register undocumented immigrants living in these settlements, despite it being a legal requirement, arguing that it encourages the ongoing existence of the settlements. However, without a fixed address, undocumented migrant workers find it difficult to register on

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<sup>183</sup> According to the Living Conditions Survey's AROPE indicator (based on a multidimensional approach to poverty that encompasses the monetary, material deprivation and difficulties, and intensity in employment) using data for 2019.

<sup>184</sup> Introduction to the Reality of Settlements in Spain. Mesa de la Integración de Huelva (2017): Reality of the Settlements in the Province of Huelva. For more information see CEPAIM, and European Network on Statelessness, "Statelessness and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion" (2020), [https://files.institutesi.org/UPR35\\_Spain.pdf](https://files.institutesi.org/UPR35_Spain.pdf).

the census, a requirement which, as outlined above, is essential to prove length of stay in Spain for residency purposes but also to access public health care.

Sometimes local authorities dismantle the settlements without rehousing their inhabitants, leaving them without shelter. The shortage of rental housing is compounded by the unjustified reluctance of homeowners to rent to migrant workers. While local NGOs have long campaigned for better housing, awareness of the issue has recently become international as a result of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights' trip to Spain in early 2020, who, after visiting a settlement in Huelva, said that the conditions in which immigrants live are "inhumane" and "are among the worst he had seen anywhere in the world."<sup>185</sup> Subsequently, in November 2020, a national political party and two local NGOs<sup>186</sup> filed a complaint with the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions, asking for it to urge the European Commission to open an investigation into human rights violations in the Andalusian settlements connected to agricultural activity.

The documented migrant agricultural workers who live permanently in Spain, tend to be more skilled and experienced and live in the south where demand for their labour is greater and there are job opportunities throughout much of the year. This guarantees them a stable income, higher salaries, greater bargaining power on working conditions, and unemployment protection. Job stability and living within reach of a town provides them potentially better access to housing and public services and the opportunity for reunification with family in their country of origin or family formation. The cost of living is also lower, and the climate is more benign – important considerations given that many still live in precarious housing and experience energy poverty.

However, under the current Special Agriculture Social Security Regime, they are not eligible for unemployment protection. Access to three-month contributory unemployment benefits requires working continuously throughout the year, which necessarily excludes most seasonal workers, who work on and off and with temporary contracts. In addition, companies commonly declare fewer days worked than those actually worked by their employees.

## Greece

Regular migrant workers have limited access to basic social rights and services, including housing, public health; public education and training; and social welfare benefits, while undocumented migrant workers often find themselves with no access at all. Although, as discussed further on, this has been affected by the pandemic.

The expansion of intensive agriculture in western Greece heavily relies on the availability and 'just in time' labour, most often provided by migrant workers. As farmers acknowledge:

"Western Greece's (...) fields expand in many hectares and various crops are cultivated in the plains. We are very strong. For me there are two types of cultivation. There is greenhouse production; regardless of what you plant, you rest heavily on the availability of [labour] 'hands.' So, you need 'hands.' And then there are open field crops. The vineyards, the watermelons, potatoes ... are open field crops. That is, open field crop compared to a greenhouse cultivation; their daily wage requirements are [different like] day and night. They do not compare, so the problem in greenhouse production is labour. You have [labour]; You move on [with the production]. You don't have [labour]; [then] you are done."<sup>187</sup>

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185 United Nations. "Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights" (OHCHR (United Nations), Accessed October 28, 2021), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/poverty/pages/srextremepovertyindex.aspx>.

186 Europa Press, "IU y Una Asociación De Mazagón (Huelva) Piden Más Adhesiones a La Iniciativa En El Parlamento Europeo Sobre Chabolismo," europapress.es (Europa Press, March 17, 2021), <https://www.europapress.es/andalucia/huelva-00354/noticia-iu-asociacion-mazagon-huelva-piden-mas-adhesiones-iniciativa-parlamento-europeo-chabolismo-20210317175822.html>.

187 Interview ML.15.

There are no official figures on the number of migrants working in agriculture and living in western Greece, particularly during peak seasons, but they are estimated at between 6,000 and 10,000.<sup>188</sup> One local resident commented:

“This number is a bit arbitrary [because we count them] based on how many work in factories, packaging plants, and how many are needed for the various crops.”<sup>189</sup>

Therefore, the actual numbers of migrants working in the agricultural sector, staying and living in the area in peak season may be much higher. The increasing number is putting pressure on rural infrastructure, including access to housing, water and health care. As a local government official remarked:

“When you have [in the rural community] a water supply system for covering the needs of 1,000 people and in some cases 8,000 people are present [who live temporarily in the village], you understand that, especially in the summer months, there is a problem.”<sup>190</sup>

Lack of access to adequate housing is identified by many interviewees as a serious problem. Housing problems cited include poor living conditions; unavailability of housing seasonal workers; and the lack of sufficient migrant housing units in general. In the 1990s, when migrant workers with irregular status first started working in the emerging sector, access to housing was limited. Over the years and following the regularisation programmes they improved their living and housing conditions and a substantial number bought property.<sup>191</sup> However, many South Asian migrant workers live in temporary huts made from greenhouse materials. Pesticide and chemical exposure, lack of adequate and poor housing conditions, and lack of access to basic amenities such as drinking water, hot water, central heating, and toilets are among the basic problems faced by Bangladeshi and other south Asian migrant workers. This social and housing segregation, together with spatial isolation from the local community, sometimes results in social tensions and local conflicts, while undermining their opportunities for social cohesion and integration.

Migrant workers in the agricultural sector have access to primary healthcare irrespective of their legal status. However, those without legal permits often avoid hospital care as they are afraid of deportation. The latter often results in poor health and undiagnosed illness particularly heart conditions and diabetes (Interview ML 3). Limited knowledge of Greek and/or English and the lack of cultural mediators at hospitals in rural areas further accentuates access to healthcare - with migrant workers depending on peer support for translation.

Bureaucratic processes requiring migrant workers to be registered with local health and social security systems include issuing them the necessary registry number (AMKA). This is in itself a barrier with fluctuating regulation on eligibility.<sup>192</sup> The constant changes in healthcare access regulations and associated uncertainty, in addition to the complicated bureaucracy attached to accessing healthcare and social security, especially given language barriers and the lack of information and guidance to migrant and immigrant workers on these

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188 Interviews ML.1, ML.20, ML.3.

189 Interview ML.3.

190 Interview ML.1.

191 Papadopoulos and Fratsea 2017a; Papadopoulos and Fratsea 2017b

192 A summary of the constant changes to the relevant law and administrative processes is illustrative: the Social Security Registry Number (AMKA) was introduced in 1 June 2009 (Law 3655/2008) as the sole labour and social security registries identifier and administrative prerequisite for access to all relevant services, issued to all residents of Greece, including non-citizens. In 2014, Law 4251/2014 effectively excluded individuals who cannot prove lawful entrance and residency in the country from receiving any service from public authorities, including the issuing of AMKA and relevant health and social security public services. In 2016, a new government once more expanded the scope of coverage to include all migrants, immigrants, and asylum seekers (Laws 4368/2016 and 4375/2016), albeit retaining some of the bureaucratic requirements. On 20 June 2019 by administrative ministerial order, these requirements were largely lifted, simplifying the procedure. Just a couple of weeks later, on 11 July 2019 the minister of the newly elected government issued a new order repealing the previous one, reverting to status quo ante. In October 2019, a new order introduced access restrictions to AMKA issuing public authorities and offices, followed, on 1 November 2019, by the introduction of the ‘Temporary (Registry) Number for the Social Security and Healthcare of Non-Citizens’ (Π.Α.Α.Υ.Π.Α.) with Law 4636/2019 thus creating a separate process that migrants and immigrants ought to follow. However, it was not until February 2020 that the necessary ministerial decisions were issued to include asylum seekers in the new scheme.

processes, constitute significant barriers to migrant workers' accessing their social rights in Greece.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Agricultural migrant workers are some of the lowest paid and most exploited members of the labour markets in the four countries examined. Their exploitative conditions of employment are largely enabled by the unwillingness of each country's government to extend and enforce social protections and working rights to them. Employers, for their part, often use semi-legal and illegal regulatory loopholes to avoid paying unemployment insurance to migrant workers. They hire them with no contracts, and deduct pay under various pretexts. This means that, for many migrants, minimum pay requirements are de facto meaningless. Migrants with irregular status are in particularly vulnerable to such abuses.

The regulatory and legal environment governing migrant labour is therefore a significant source of agricultural migrant workers' vulnerability in the four countries examined. Measures against undocumented migrant workers, for example, lead to severe difficulties in their accessing basic public services, such as healthcare and unemployment insurance. Documented migrant workers, in turn, are also subject to different forms of inequalities. For example, countries may enact laws that exempt employers from having to make social security contributions for their employees. Some categories of migrant workers, such as seasonal workers, are therefore legally denied unemployment insurance and healthcare.

Denial of equal social rights and protections to agricultural migrant workers reinforces their vulnerability to employers and exacerbates exploitation. Many live in employer-provided accommodation. Undocumented migrant workers depend on their employers' goodwill for any chance of being regularised and therefore have little incentive to fight against their exploitative and abusive work practices.

When migrant workers do summon the courage to sue their employers for exploitation, they may find their host country's legal system inaccessible – with non-existent translation – costly and bureaucratic. Union assistance with legal processes is also unforthcoming as most agricultural migrant workers do not belong to a union.

Many migrant workers live in dilapidated, overcrowded housing, sometimes far away from work sites; or, as the Spanish and Greek case studies illustrate, in settlements with no basic amenities. That migrants live in these conditions signals a statutory unwillingness to protect their right to decent housing. It can also perpetuate a dynamic of exclusion, whereby migrant workers live in remote areas, away from the rest of the local area's population. Migrant workers who obtain housing informally find that they cannot register with local authorities for the purposes of obtaining access to healthcare and, additionally, cannot begin the process of obtaining a legal residency.

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# **4. REMOTE AND VULNERABLE: AGRICULTURAL MIGRANT WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION**

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# REMOTE AND VULNERABLE: AGRICULTURAL MIGRANT WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Migrants' isolated and segregated living and working conditions and seasonal mobility patterns undermine any opportunities to meet and form connections with local communities. Many migrants also have language gaps that further distance them from the local population. Their social network is largely composed of migrant co-workers on whom they may sometimes rely for material support and job opportunities.

## Germany

The vast majority of migrant workers in agriculture in Germany (less in the meat industry) undergo short-term, seasonal migration. Although some return to work in the agricultural sector many times, their living conditions and (lack of) participation in civic life remain unchanged over the years. Their working and living conditions, very similar to those described in Spain, are a first, big obstacle to any significant social cohesion. Working up to 12 hours a day for six or even seven days/week, with barely time for anything else but working, eating, and sleeping, they live on site, not coming into contact with the local community. Often the only German person the workers come across is their employer (and, in some cases, the security force patrolling their accommodation and work site).

Language barriers are closely linked to migrant workers' short-term migration, their working and living conditions and the isolation and lack of opportunities to interact with local communities. 'Integration' ("*Integrationskurs*") courses are offered by the state but difficult to access for a variety of reasons. The classes require proof of residence, which many migrant workers do not have. The course is obligatory and free of charge for some categories of TCNs and voluntary for EU citizens but only free of charge if the person is receiving social unemployment benefits. Otherwise, the course must be paid for, and is often too expensive for those working in agriculture. A further problem is the timing of the classes, with few running in the evening.

Seasonal migration in Germany very much resembles the initial ideal behind the guest worker programmes in the second half of the last century, namely that of a temporary and rotating workforce without social cost for the state. Seasonal migrants provide the country its much needed agricultural workforce, but, given their temporally limited permanence, do not "really migrate" to Germany. They do not enter its social system and their social connections remain in their country of origin. This form of temporary migration satisfies the needs of Germany's economy without representing a threat to those concerned about the "integration tensions" of a high number of migrants entering the country.

Only when access to social security mechanisms and labour and social rights are guaranteed for agricultural migrant workers, can further steps be made towards their participation in political and social life and increased social cohesion. However, it remains unclear if improved employment and social opportunities would change the migration model from seasonal to long-term.

## Spain

The extent to which migrant workers are able to build social networks in Spain depends on a wide range of factors, including the nature of their residence, whether they are EU or non-EU nationals and, in the case of non-EU workers, whether they have residency and work permits. As already discussed, seasonal agricultural



workers make few social connections and return to their country of origin at the end of the harvest.

Those coming from EU countries (mostly from Romania and other Eastern European countries), have total freedom of movement to work in the EU, and often link together campaigns throughout the year in different parts of Spain (or even in different EU countries). In many cases, they are hired by companies for which they have already worked in previous years. Their main barrier is finding housing, as their employers are not required to provide it. After the harvest is finished, they also voluntarily return to their country and home to spend their vacations.

Seasonal immigrants from non-EU countries recruited through the system of collective management of hiring at origin (GECCO) for a specific agricultural campaign, are dependent on their employer to provide housing, and as already outlined, this tends to be isolated, far from urban areas and without public transportation to connect them. While they must return to their countries at the end of the campaign, some decide to stay in Spain after the end of their contract. They then become part of the pool of undocumented migrant workers as they are prevented from being hired again in subsequent campaigns and no longer have legal coverage to reside and work in Spain.

The other large group of foreign agricultural workers are those permanently residing in Spain. A minority (EU and non-EU citizens) have legal residence. As discussed above, with a more stable income and more opportunities to access housing and services, they may have the opportunity to form social connections. However, the much larger group of undocumented non-EU citizens, move around the country, find it difficult to find decent accommodation, tend to live in isolated areas and do not have the time or means to develop connections in the local region. Their economic and social exclusion means they face difficulties taking advantage of public health services and social assistance.

## Ireland

Lack of information and concerns about the immigration system create uncertainty, discourage engagement with wider society and political life and hinder the process of individual integration for migrants in Ireland. As one NGO representative interviewed for this report said, “a lot of migrants don’t know they have the same rights as Irish citizens,”<sup>193</sup> adding that they may not know they can vote in elections. Even the respondent admitted to not being aware of her right to vote despite having worked for NGOs in Ireland for years. Other problems, such as not having a driving license, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to public transportation, can all limit employment and participation opportunities.

While Ireland’s approach to integration is becoming more comprehensive, the Migrant Integration Policy Index concludes that non-EU migrants “only feel halfway secure about their future in Ireland.”<sup>194</sup> Irish immigration laws make it difficult for non-EU newcomers to secure their career, family life and residence in Ireland and encourage the public to see immigrants as their neighbours and their equals, but not yet as full citizens.<sup>195</sup> Non-EU residents confront ambiguity in decision-making about their legal status, which undermines their willingness and ability to invest and settle in Ireland as their future home. NGOs supporting migrants have called for comprehensive legislation against hate speech and hate crime, racism and discrimination; greater investment in support services and a better appeal process for immigration decisions, in addition to demands for greater clarity and transparency in decision-making.<sup>196</sup>

Together with structural obstacles to participation, such as bureaucracy and living and working conditions, migrant workers may self-segregate due to language and other cultural barriers. Lack of services and support

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193 Interview IE.15.

194 MIPEX, “Key Findings Ireland: MIPEX 2020” [www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu), accessed November 18, 2021, <https://www.mipex.eu/ireland>.

195 *ibid*

196 *ibid*

for the most marginalised migrants, including refugees, may restrict contact with Irish citizens. A migrant association interviewed for this report runs courses in partnership with Salesforce, a digital management company, enabling residents of direct provision<sup>197</sup> to have their first contact ever with Irish citizens. Few organisations represent both migrant workers and Irish citizens in low wage work, despite common areas of interest and concern.

## Greece

Migrant labour is not a unified category in Greece, but an aggregation of individuals with different nationalities; residency statuses; family structures; educational qualifications, social networks and varying coping strategies depending on their geographical location and capacity to adapt under new circumstances. Those who entered Greece under the first regularisation schemes in the 1990s created the preconditions for migrant labour inclusion by allowing them to obtain a more secured position in the country. By the 2000s, these older migrant labourers had moved up the rural social ladder and often moved out of the agricultural sector.<sup>198</sup> A move made possible by newly arrived (and potentially less skilled and more vulnerable) migrants filling the least well paid and secure jobs. Community networks - exploited, for example, by Albanian migrants - were pivotal for securing upward social mobility and retaining migrant labour on farms.<sup>199</sup>

However, this upward mobility was jeopardised by the 2008/9 economic crisis. Migrant workers were increasingly (and much more than for the population as a whole) trapped in insecure and precarious segments of the labour market and in the informal economy, which also increased due to wider economic contraction.<sup>200</sup>

During the economic recession, migrant unemployment rates increased by 26 per cent, reaching 33 per cent between 2008 and 2015 compared to a national unemployment rate of 17 per cent. In addition, the poverty rate among migrant households was 45 per cent in 2012 compared with 20 per cent for households as a whole. The risk of in-work poverty was 2.4 times higher for migrants.<sup>201</sup> In this context, migrants have devised resilience strategies for their (and their families') survival and well-being, including mobilising to defend their income against employer pressures to shrink their wages further.

Notwithstanding, many migrants in Greece, as in the other case studies, are still 'trapped' in areas of the labour market that are the most insecure, thereby exacerbating their social exclusion and marginalisation.<sup>202</sup> While migrants have continued to fill vacancies that had previously remained unfilled, their continued marginalisation contributes to a negative public perception that they, as newcomers, benefit more than

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197 A detailed overview of the Direct Provision system in Ireland is available at: Citizens Information, "Direct Provision System", Direct provision system (Citizensinformation.ie), accessed November 18, 2021, [https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving-country/asylum\\_seekers\\_and\\_refugees/services\\_for\\_asylum\\_seekers\\_in\\_ireland/direct\\_provision.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/moving-country/asylum_seekers_and_refugees/services_for_asylum_seekers_in_ireland/direct_provision.html).

198 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, "Begin from the Bottom and Move up' : Social Mobility of Immigrant Labour in Rural Greece," *Méditerranée*, no. 113 (2009): pp. 25-39, <https://doi.org/10.4000/mediterranee.3636>; Lois Labrianidis and Theodosia Sykas, "Geographical Proximity and Immigrant Labour in Agriculture: Albanian Immigrants in the Greek Countryside," *Sociologia Ruralis* 49, no. 4 (September 2009): pp. 394-414, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2009.00494.x>; Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Christos Chalkias, and Loukia-Maria Fratsea, "Challenges to Immigrant Associations and Ngos in Contemporary Greece." *Migration Letters* 10, no. 3 (2013): 342-58. <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v10i3.133>.

199 Charlotta Hedberg, Carmo Renato Miguel do, and Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, "Transnational Immigration in Rural Greece: Analysing the Different Mobilities of Albanian Immigrants," in *Translocal Ruralism: Mobility and Connectivity in European Rural Spaces* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012); Apostolos G. Papadopoulos and Loukia-Maria Fratsea, "Temporary migrant workers in Greek agriculture" (Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation, 2017).

200 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos and Loukia-Maria Fratsea, "Temporary migrant workers in Greek agriculture" (Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation, 2017); Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Loukia-Maria Fratsea, and George Mavrommatis. "Governing migrant labour in an intensive agricultural area in Greece: Precarity, political mobilization and migrant agency in the fields of Manolada." *Journal of Rural Studies* 64 (2018): 200-209.

201 OECD, "Greece Policy Brief: Addressing Migration Challenges Beyond The Current Humanitarian Crisis" (OECD Publishing, 2016) <https://www.oecd.org/policy-briefs/greece-addressing-migration-challenges-beyond-the-current-humanitarian-crisis.pdf>; Jennifer Cavounidis, "The Migration Experience of Greece and the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Its Migrant and Native Populations," *European Journal of Public Health* 28, no. suppl\_5 (2018): pp. 20-23, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cky204>.

202 Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Loukia-Maria Fratsea, and George Mavrommatis. "Governing migrant labour in an intensive agricultural area in Greece: Precarity, political mobilization and migrant agency in the fields of Manolada." *Journal of Rural Studies* 64 (2018): 200-209.

the local population.<sup>203</sup> It is argued that immigrants have contributed to an expansion of the already large informal economy and therefore increased competition between Greek unskilled and semi-skilled workers, increasing income inequality and unemployment among low status workers in general.<sup>204</sup> Migrant labour and mobility depends upon social and regional inequalities, while the latter increase or diminish migrant flows. A recent report highlights the need to increase social mobility for large sections of the population who currently have limited opportunities, by improving access to a dynamic labour market, providing universal access to social security benefits, health and education; alleviating regional inequalities and creating formal integration policies for migrants.<sup>205</sup>

## Conclusion

Most agricultural migrant work examined in this report is temporary and/or seasonal. Migrant workers' lives revolve around their work in farms or agricultural processing plants. Their extended working hours and isolated – usually segregated – living conditions make it infeasible to build social networks. What relationships they build will mostly involve co-workers within their farms and accommodation. In Spain, permanently settled migrants who have developed skills and have fixed employment for one employer have managed to establish roots and become part of their local communities.

However, even when migrants live in one place and are permanently settled, such as Brazilian migrants in Ireland, limited command of the host country's language can make it difficult for migrant workers not only to form attachments, but also to claim and access basic social rights. Unfortunately, too many of the countries reviewed for this report do not offer language tuition to agricultural migrant workers, whether because they are considered non-permanent or undocumented residents, or because the location and scheduling of state-provided lessons do not fit with agricultural migrant workers' demanding work schedules.

Provision of language classes is another area ripe for state and civil society intervention, especially as language classes could also be used to introduce migrants to their host country's culture and facilitate relationships with other migrants. NGOs are beginning to provide this form of support in addition to emergency material and housing support to migrants in need. Some examples of these initiatives are discussed in the next section.

## 4.1 Engagement with NGOs, trade unions and other civic organisations

The work of different social actors in reaching out to agricultural migrants is vital yet complicated by the working and living conditions documented above, the short-term nature of their migration as well as by language barriers. This section examines the extent to which agricultural migrant workers are able to access and engage with organised civic institutions, such as trade unions, NGOs and associations, that could offer them opportunities to connect with the local community; facilitate integration; build solidarity; protect their social rights and improve their working conditions. The structural barriers, including seasonal modes of migration, long working days, isolated working conditions and language barriers, undermine migrants' capacity to build local social networks and inhibit civic forms of engagement. The isolated working conditions of most agricultural migrant workers make it very difficult for them to access NGOs and trade unions. The latter, moreover, are usually ill-equipped to cater to them. That said, there are promising civic and trade union initiatives that have managed to involve and help migrant workers in different ways.

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203 Carlota Solé, "Immigration Policies in Southern Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 6 (2004): pp. 1209-1221, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183042000286313>.

204 Ioannis Cholezas and Panos Tsakloglou, "The Economic Impact of Immigration in Greece: Taking Stock of the Existing Evidence." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 1-2 (2009): 77-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683850902723439>.

205 Christopher Pissarides, Sriram Bharadwaj, Elizabeth Pula, and Paul Daley, "Lessons from the Economic-Epidemiological Frontier" (Project Syndicate, April 29, 2020), <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/economic-epidemiological-models-favor-covid19-social-distancing-by-christopher-pissarides-et-al-2020-04>.

## Germany

German unions experience great difficulty in reaching agricultural migrant workers and laying the ground for their involvement in unions, for reasons already mentioned, including their working and living conditions, the short term nature of their migration and language barriers. Reform of union processes and rules is required to make participation more attractive to these workers.

In 2020, the IG BAU union (*Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt*), the fifth biggest union in Germany, representing approximately 250,000 workers in construction, agriculture and the environmental sectors, took an important step towards migrant workers. In order to promote the engagement and inclusion of seasonal workers, especially in agriculture, the union started offering a new, more flexible form of membership. Instead of being permanent, it is time limited to one year and can be renewed on termination. Unlike a classic membership model, workers can obtain legal support from day one of their membership and receive information and support (if possible, in their mother language) in the event of striking.

Other union-funded initiatives, such as *Faire Mobilität*, focus on the enforcement of labour rights, see Box 4:1 below.

### **Box 4:1: The Fair Mobility ("*Faire Mobilität*") project (Germany)**

This project is financed by unions and offers support to EU-migrants on their working rights in several locations throughout the country. Counselling is provided in migrant workers' own languages and – most importantly in the case of agricultural migrants – they carry out regular on-site visits to the fields and the farms at the beginning of the harvesting season to reach out directly to workers, inform them of their rights (e.g. on the current minimum wage or specific rights and risks during the Covid-19 pandemic) and leave their contact details. This first in-person meeting and the dissemination of essential basic information enables workers to contact them later on during the season, should problems occur on site. Further support is also offered through online information portals offered in various languages.

## Spain

Local NGOs provide seasonal workers living in illegal settlements with basic necessities such as drinking water, food, warm clothes, and household goods. They provide emergency assistance when migrant workers' temporary shelters burn down and they lose everything. This may be setting up soup kitchens, providing clothes and blankets to those sleeping outdoors, or access to centres where they can wash and access online services to communicate with their families. These NGOs also play an important role in negotiating housing solutions with local authorities and organising protests and social media campaigns raising political awareness of migrant workers' living conditions. Please see Box 4:2 below for an example of an initiative addressing inadequate housing for seasonal workers in Lepe, Huelva.

**Box 4:2 The New Citizens Association for Interculturalism<sup>206</sup> (ASNUCI) (Asociación Nuevos Ciudadanos por la Interculturalidad) shelter (Spain)**

ASNUCI, an NGO made up mainly of African immigrants, with limited resources, based in Lepe, Huelva, a strawberry-growing town, crowdfunded the construction of a hostel, with capacity for 40 people. Members can book this temporary accommodation for a maximum of three months. It aims to be self-sufficient, in that basic utilities are covered by user fees (€5 a night), and self-managed, in terms of maintenance and cleaning.

This initiative shows that decent accommodation for seasonal workers is possible, and that it is local authorities and businesses who lack the political will to articulate an effective response, even though the latter benefit from employing seasonal workers.

In 2018, it was the campaigning of NGOs in the feminist movement that brought to national and international attention the exploitation of Moroccan women workers hired in the strawberry harvests. These organisations provided legal aid to women who filed lawsuits on labour and sexual abuses. This caused a considerable reputational crisis in the sector and forced the Andalusian government and major unions to adopt measures such as the approval of a gender equality protocol in their collective bargaining agreement, the development of a code of best practices, and the employment of the intercultural consultants and mediator for worksites. However, such measures have not prevented employers from continuing to commit human rights violations.

Non-profits also support foreign seasonal workers living permanently in Spain. Their presence is particularly notable in the biggest agricultural areas in the south. Local governments either pay them to carry out their services or subsidise their work. Many other smaller NGOs also operate at the local level, working with all immigrants, whether documented or not, supported by membership fees or donations. Services provided include advice on immigration and labour rights; language courses; vocational training; job search assistance; mediation with employers, help finding rentals and intervening with landlords; support carrying out administrative procedures, such as signing up for the census or obtaining a healthcare card, and accompanying them to appointments.

The work of local organisations or associations formed by immigrants themselves, is particularly important. While they do not receive public subsidies, these small mutual support networks play a vital role in welcoming newly arrived migrants, providing them with a range of information in their own language and support services.

Union membership among foreign farm workers is very low and limited to the minority of workers who have relatively stable employment in large companies. Undocumented seasonal workers do not even have the right to unionise. Foreign seasonal workers have very little contact with the largest trade unions, although in some cases they turn to them to report abuses and ask for legal assistance. In addition to little union support, workers face a range of obstacles to organising collective whistleblowing including their temporary contracts; high mobility and turnover; language barriers; distance between workplaces and fear of losing their jobs; being denied renewal of their work permits; or being deported.

Nevertheless, unions have an important indirect role in defending the interests of migrant workers. They participate in shaping the legal and institutional framework governing labour relations in agriculture through collective bargaining and government-level dialogue. This includes promoting the renewal and improvement

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<sup>206</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Asnucci-nuevos-ciudadanos-por-la-interculturalidad-190535224651479/>

of collective bargaining agreements, lobbying for a system of hiring at origin that respects labour rights and participating in the agreement of codes of best practices with employers' associations.

## Ireland

In Ireland, several NGOs (see Box 4:3 for one example) assist migrant communities providing advocacy and support with, for example, navigating the Irish bureaucratic system; internet access, day care and tutoring services for children, legal assistance and pro bono legal advice; domestic abuse services and financial literacy training. Migrants who access these services potentially share the information they learn back into their respective communities.

### **Box 4:3 Gort Resource Centre (GRC), Gort, Ireland<sup>207</sup>**

GRC runs a successful domestic abuse programme engaging women from a multiethnic community, translating crucial educational material in a range of languages. Diverse groups come together and bond in their workshops,<sup>208</sup> which are “not about creating experts, but about educating participants so they [can] go back into their community so word is from the horse’s mouth and they know how to respond and how to refer.”<sup>209</sup> As a result, more women have been educated about domestic abuse, and are more comfortable engaging with services.

Not being able to speak English remains a key barrier to migrants when finding work, accessing housing and understanding their rights as tenants; or making informed decisions about healthcare. English language classes are one of the most accessed resources. Typically, these classes meet after work hours in the evening, a few times a week, and incorporate information about how to navigate daily life in Ireland. Classes cover everyday communication, for example, with landlords and doctors. They are also designed to introduce migrants to social networks and cultural events, for example, Dublin’s Chinese New Year. Some organisations, such as Nasc, the migrant and refugee rights centre, provide female-led classes for women to foster a safe and friendly space to learn and develop confidence.

Such NGOs provide a robust network of services that help migrant workers overcome structural barriers and become active citizens in their communities. They can also raise awareness about needs within migrant communities. For example, the Immigration Council of Ireland’s (ICI) integration team hosts racism awareness and intercultural communication workshops, with the support of statutory agencies and community leaders.<sup>210</sup> The council also runs workshops for larger companies to educate their employees on racism and xenophobia in the workplace; although their workshops are voluntary.<sup>211</sup>

NGOs also provide information to migrants who may not feel represented or understand their political rights.<sup>212</sup> ICI, for example, works with political parties in order to help them become more mindful of the diverse constituencies that they represent. It also works to improve the capacity for migrant leaders to become more civically engaged. These programs have seen success, where migrant communities are able to engage with local authorities and convey their individual needs. In return, political parties have been more active in providing important civic and legal information to migrant communities to help them participate in the political system and best navigate everyday life. ICI aspires to expand these initiatives into areas such

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207 <http://www.gortfrc.com/>

208 Interview IE.5.

209 *ibid.*

210 Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), “Intercultural and Anti-Racism Training,” Immigrant Council of Ireland, accessed November 22, 2021, <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/training/intercultural-anti-racism-training>.

211 Interview IE.14.

212 Pamela Mason interview.

as the direct provision centres. In one pilot programme, the Immigration council lobbied alongside residents for improved transportation and infrastructure between towns and direct provision centres, successfully convincing the council to grant them a bike sharing scheme.<sup>213</sup>

Heavy work demands and the limited time that migrants stay in Ireland may mean that community involvement is not an immediate priority. It may also become exploitative when migrant workers have to volunteer to improve their CVs or immigration status. If migrants are to participate in society through volunteering, the process must be reciprocated by Irish nationals also volunteering as part of including and validating the existence of migrants into Ireland.

While collaboration between labour unions, civil society organisations representing migrant communities, and migrant workers already existed prior to the pandemic, it has become more visible since it began. Civil society organisations (CSO), such as Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), have conducted regular surveys of migrants, especially those who are undocumented and are often working in home or childcare or agriculture.<sup>214</sup> Reports of exploitative working conditions, collected by MRCI, echo concerns voiced by labour union representatives, including, differentiated treatment within workplaces, being placed in the least hygienic parts of meat processing plants, for instance.<sup>215</sup>

The weak representation of unions has affected access to sick pay and adequate state oversight of health and safety. Doras, an independent NGO focused on promoting human rights and migrant rights within Ireland, conducted a survey of migrant workers in 2016 on employment rights and support through trade union membership.<sup>216</sup> 90 per cent of respondents were not members of trade unions, and half were not aware of unions in their sector. Mistrust of unions, difficulties reaching workers who work in small scale organisations, the expense of union dues for those on low wages and the lack of union data on migrants contribute to the currently low rates of union membership among migrant workers.

Migrant workers who join unions receive substantially improved working conditions and improved standards of living. They can receive four weeks' holiday pay minimum, wage protections, as well as assistance with medical care.<sup>217</sup> Unions also offer a platform for advocacy and engagement in civic and political life. By becoming involved as union members, participating in events and organising other workers, migrant workers can also become union staff members specialised in specific industries.

This process differs from other forms of individual engagement described in the interviews, which remained based within the migrant community. Institutions such as churches and CSOs organise dedicated activities for specific migrant groups, that may perpetuate what has been termed "bounded solidarity." Based on family and close friendships, it may benefit members but also lead to 'exclusion experiences:'

"While bounded solidarity creates obvious advantages for migrants, it can also reproduce disadvantages among migrants, especially where it leads to few bridges beyond the network. Some migrants are so embedded within the network that their capacity to develop linguistic capital is diminished, which in turn lessen[s] social and economic opportunities more broadly."<sup>218</sup>

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213 Interview IE.14.

214 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "Working to the Bone: The Experiences of Migrant Workers in the Meat Sector in Ireland" (MRCI, 2020), [https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report\\_Working-to-the-bone\\_final.pdf](https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report_Working-to-the-bone_final.pdf).

215 Interview IE.6.

216 Doras Luimní, "Migrant Workers and Trade Union Membership" (Doras Luimní, 2016), <http://doras.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Migrant-Workers-Trade-Union-Membership.pdf>.

217 Interview IE.17.

218 Brian McGrath and Frank Murray. "Brazilian Migrants in Ireland, Emergent Themes from Research and Practice on the Significance of Social Networks and Social Capital." *European Commission* (2009): 10–15. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/brazilian-migrants-in-ireland-emergent-themes-from-research-and-practice-on-the-significance-of-social-networks-and-social-capital>.

Unionisation, and wider collaboration with CSOs to defend the rights of workers, including migrants, inverts this conception of bounded solidarity, which in this case, is workplace-based, rather than being reliant on specific relationships within the migrant community. On a practical level, SIPTU has been successful in industries characterised by high levels of migrant employees. In 2006, mushroom farming workers, supported by the SIPTU and MRCI, organised against pay and working conditions in the industry (see Box 4:4).<sup>219</sup>

#### **Box 4:4 Mushroom Workers Support Group, Ireland**

In 2006, 17 mushroom farm workers in Co. Cavan walked off their jobs claiming they had worked nearly 100 hours weekly for €250, with no sick pay, days off, or holidays. Hearing the story of these workers and discovering such conditions were widespread in the mushroom and horticulture industry, SIPTU and the MRCI provided a platform for these workers to demand better pay and working conditions, creating the Mushroom Workers Support Group (MWSG). Between February and September 2010, these organisations encouraged 1300 mushroom workers to participate in the group's activities; attending union meetings and voice concerns directly to management. As a result of the campaign, a Registered Employment Agreement for mushroom workers was established, setting out terms and conditions, rates of pay, holiday entitlements and sick pay for the industry. Mushroom pickers also won the transfer of hundreds of thousands of Euro in unpaid wages. Conditions and pay for workers improved dramatically, and SIPTU recruited 1700 mushroom farm workers to unionise.

Unions are also focusing on undocumented migrants, concerned at their lack of recognition in Irish and European society more widely. The MRCI is currently working on an initiative to achieve justice for undocumented groups, but this is a difficult campaign to promote as in-country applications for work permits from undocumented workers are usually not accepted.

#### **Greece**

#### **Box 4.5: Migrant Integration Centres (MICs) Greece**

Set up as branches of community centres, the main aim of MICs is to inform and offer support to third country nationals, migrants and refugees. They offer psychosocial support, legal counselling, and reliable information on TNCs' social rights and entitlements to public services which help them improve their livelihoods and facilitate their access to the local labour market and the local society. Clients are both regular and irregular migrants and refugees. MICs have an important role in building trust among migrant workers, local authorities and the wider community. They also provide information and support on family reunification and enrolling children in school; thus enhancing migrants' participation in local society.

In Greece, the unionisation of migrant workers has been challenging, mainly due to legal constraints on collective association and bargaining. It is difficult for atypical workers to confirm their employment status, more so when they are construed as undocumented 'illegal' workers. This impedes their access to the relevant provisions of Laws 1264/1982 and 1876/1990 that act as the main instruments regulating collective labour law in Greece. However, migrant agricultural workers have engaged in collective organisation, with the support

219 "With effect from 19 October 2017, the SEO has effect in the Construction Sector. The SEO applies to all Building Firms and Civil Engineering Firms as defined in the order. The SEO makes it compulsory for Building Firms and Civil Engineering Firms to pay construction workers the rates of pay provided in the order and to provide a pension and sick pay scheme for the categories of workers as defined in the order. The SEO also contains a dispute resolution procedure to be utilised in the event of a dispute arising over a term in the order." See: The Labour Court, "Sectoral Employment Orders," Sectoral Employment Orders, accessed November 22, 2021, <https://www.labourcourt.ie/en/publications/sectoral-employment-orders/>.



of local NGOs, political activists and lawyers<sup>220</sup> in an attempt to develop associations that will communicate their difficulties and working conditions to the public, support their members and individual workers, and also act as intermediaries with employers in negotiating working conditions and in individual and collective labour disputes (See Box 4:5). Examples of NGOs offering support include Generation 2.0 For Rights Equality and Diversity, which developed Manolada Watch<sup>221</sup> (a specific initiative set up with Manolada strawberry field workers) and the Greek Forum of Migrants,<sup>222</sup> a network of migrant associations and communities acting as a second level umbrella organisation for local migrant initiatives that are themselves usually organised on the basis of nationality.

Manolada Watch has been critical in assisting the collective organisation of local migrant workers (including supporting the *Chowdury* case) in Southern Greece and the Peloponnese strawberry fields. It has also monitored the conditions on the ground and communicated them through publishing regular reports.<sup>223</sup> Support for migrant workers, including with collective organising, is also provided by local trade unions and relevant labour organisations (such as local regional Labour Centres, trans-occupational second level trade unions).<sup>224</sup> The Institute of Labour of the General Confederation of Greek Workers<sup>225</sup> has also been critical in monitoring and reporting the conditions of migrant workers, conducting invaluable research that effectively covers the relevant gaps left by public authorities (including the Ministry of Labour).<sup>226</sup>

It is perhaps important to note, finally, that it has been suggested that the difference in treatment of migrant workers by employers across different regions in Greece might be attributed to a difference in local culture and history of labour organisation and struggles.<sup>227</sup> Such a history appears to have fostered the development of employer and local worker ethos that is more sympathetic to worker rights and needs, including as regards the enjoyment of basic conditions of accommodation, working hours and breaks, and humane treatment. This is indicative of the value of labour's collective organisation and action in promoting integration and social cohesion.

## 4.2 Conclusion

Agricultural migrant workers' capacity to engage, and even access, civic organisations such as NGOs and trade unions is limited by the seasonality of their migration, their legal status and their isolated working conditions. NGOs report significant difficulties reaching agricultural migrants, as they are located in isolated farms and even then, only for a season. Being an undocumented migrant complicates access to trade unions, which typically are only designed to deal with permanently settled, registered workers who work in the same place for the long-term.

Language barriers deter migrants from engaging with trade unions and NGOs that would defend their working rights, as do the fear of dismissal and deportation for those who are undocumented. In other words, the structural conditions of agricultural migrant labour are significant obstacles to civic engagement. Yet, they are not insurmountable. It is encouraging to see numerous examples of initiatives led by NGOs and migrant associations, which successfully mobilise to provide relief, legal assistance and bureaucratic support to

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220 The work of Athens Bar lawyer Vassilis Kerassiotis is particularly noteworthy, especially in connection to the *Chowdury* case.

221 <https://g2red.org/category/manolada-watch/#>

222 <https://www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=English&type=index>

223 See: <https://g2red.org/category/manolada-watch/#>

224 As recently as 23 November 2021 [the press reported](#) (report in Greek) that migrant workers in Nea Manolada established a 'struggle committee', as a precursor to more formal organisation, with the support of trade unions, including the Amaliada and Patras Labour Centres.

225 <https://www.inegsee.gr/>

226 <https://ineobservatory.gr/>

227 Apostolos Kapsalis, interviewed by Stavros Malichoudis and Iliana Papangeli for WeAreSolomon.com. See Stavros Malichoudis and Iliana Papangeli, Apostolos Kapsalis: "We are travelling in uncharted and stormy seas" (17 February 2021, WeAreSolomon.com) <https://wearesolomon.com/mag/interviews/apostolos-kapsalis-we-are-travelling-in-uncharted-and-stormy-seas> (last accessed: 24/11/2021).

agricultural migrant workers in all four countries. The case study of NGOs assisting Moroccan strawberry pickers in Spain is a case in point. On top of that, as the example of the IG BAU trade union has shown, unions that adopt more flexible membership conditions and ways of working can make headway in unionising seasonal migrant workers.

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# **THE CARE SECTOR**

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# **5. INVALUABLE BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS**

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# 5. INVALUABLE BUT STILL EXPLOITED: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS

## 5.1 Introduction

Equality of rights and opportunities is a key pillar of social cohesion. Disparities in social rights and labour protections affect migrant workers' working lives and economic opportunities more broadly. As shown, many of the social rights and labour protections that routinely apply to the national workforces in our case studies are often curtailed for migrants by state laws and state complicity with semi-legal employment arrangements. These disparities both enable and exacerbate the exploitative conditions that characterise the employment of many migrant workers in the care system.

This chapter provides an overview of the role of migrant labour in the care sector in each of the four countries examined in this report. It outlines the context of demographic pressures affecting care and looks at the relationship between migrant care workers' unequal access to social rights and their exploitative working and living conditions.

## 5.2 Background

The care sector in Europe has confronted a series of structural challenges over the past 30 years. A rapidly ageing population, combined with the entry of women into the labour force and geographically more dispersed families have worked to strain the capacity of families to provide care for children and older relatives.<sup>230</sup> 25 per cent of Europe's population were aged 60 and above in 2020 – compared to 5.6 per cent in Africa and 13.3 per cent in Asia. By 2050, 34 per cent of the population in Europe will be over 60.<sup>231</sup> Within the EU, the share of people aged over 80 is set to double over the same period: from 6% in 2020 to 11% in 2050. A 'care crisis' looms large over European welfare politics - particularly in the domain of elderly care.<sup>232</sup> In 2016, 20 per cent of households in the EU with people in need of care due to long-term health problems used professional home care services.<sup>233</sup> Demographic trends in the EU suggest that demand for child and elderly care will continue rising well into the 21st century, exerting increasing pressures on public care systems.

The four countries examined in this report all have ageing populations with growing care needs. Although Ireland currently has the youngest population of the four, its old-age dependency ratio is projected to grow from 22 to 42 between 2020 and 2050. In other words, the ratio of Irish people aged 65 and above to those aged 15-64 will nearly double. Spain's old-age dependency ratio is also projected to double during this period, from 30 to 60. In Greece, which currently has the oldest population of the four, the old-age dependency ratio is expected to grow from 35 to 63, while in Germany the ratio will increase from 34 to 48.<sup>234</sup> Projections on

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230 European Commission, "Commission Staff Working Document on Exploiting the Employment Potential of the Personal and Household Services" SWD 95, (Strasbourg, 18 April 2012), <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7623&langId=en>.

231 Wan He, Isabella Aboderin, and Dzifa Adjaye-Gbewonyo, "Africa Aging: 2020 International Population Reports" (U.S. Department of Commerce" African Population and Health Research Center, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: 5, 2020), [https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p95\\_20-1.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p95_20-1.pdf).

232 The Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA), "Relationship-Based Home Care: A Sustainable Solution For Europe's Elder Care Crisis" (2018), [https://globalcoalitiononaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RHBC\\_Report\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://globalcoalitiononaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RHBC_Report_DIGITAL.pdf).

233 "1 In 5 Households in Need in the EU Use Professional Homecare Services," 1 in 5 households in need in the EU use professional home care services - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat, February 28, 2018, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20180228-1>.

234 Mirroring these projected upward trends in old-age dependency, the same data indicate that the median age of each country's population will also increase during the same period: from a median age of 38 to 44 in Ireland, from 44 to 50 in Spain, from 45 to 52 in Greece, and from 46 to 47 in Germany. These figures are based on the same data source.

those aged 80 and above suggest an even steeper increase in elderly care needs.<sup>235</sup> The share of people aged 80 and above in Ireland's total population will more than double - it is projected to increase from 3 per cent of the population in 2020 to 8 per cent in 2050. Similarly, the share of people aged 80 and above is set to grow in Spain (from 6 to 12 per cent), Greece (from 7 to 13 per cent) and Germany (from 7 to 12).<sup>236</sup>

Care provision is organised in a different way in each country. Nevertheless, all four have come to rely on migrant care workers to bridge growing care gaps caused by aging populations and changes to traditional family structures. Countries of origin and specific care roles of migrant care workers vary within and between countries. Only a minority, however, are employed in the formal care system. Most are employed as home care workers, including those on an informal basis. Third country nationals and EU migrants from lower-income countries constitute a cheap source of labour more willing to tolerate the strenuous work prevalent in the care sectors of more affluent EU countries.

Informal care work traditionally refers to any care-related activities that are unremunerated (e.g. when a child cares for his or her ageing parent) or otherwise remunerated in an undeclared fashion. In this report, however, informal care includes paid care services delivered by migrants (with or without a work contract) and managed in the private sphere, outside the regulatory control of state authorities.<sup>237</sup> Informal care can involve direct employment relationships between families and migrant care workers, as well as with private intermediary care agencies.<sup>238</sup> Compared to formal employment in hospitals and other institutions, informal care tends to be less regulated and visible, and more prone to breaches of labour standards by employers. Irregular (including 'undocumented') migrants are mainly employed informally.<sup>239</sup>

## Spain

Migrants occupy an increasingly prominent place in the Spanish care system - particularly in informal home care. The entry of women into the labour force combined with the insufficient participation of men in domestic tasks have underpinned soaring demand for affordable elderly care services. Public care coverage has been unable to keep up with demand, and for many families, out of pocket payments required to receive public care services are considered too expensive. As a result, demand for cheaper, informal home care services delivered by migrants has risen steadily. Data from the Survey of Health Age and Retirement in Europe indicates that in 2013, 35.6% of the population aged 65-79 and 47.7% of the population aged above 80 in Spain reported receiving professional home-based elderly care and domestic services.<sup>240</sup> Women from Latin America make up the majority of migrant care workers in Spain. Though precise figures are unclear, an estimated three million households (16.2 per cent of families) paid for house and care work in 2019.<sup>241</sup> In

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235 Trinity College Dublin. Publication, "The Irish Longitudinal Study on Aging" (TILDA) (TCD, 2021), <https://tilda.tcd.ie/>.

236 The old-age dependency ratio represents the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and over (age when most people are generally economically inactive) and the number of persons aged between 15 and 64. The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64). Countries with higher ratios can expect to expend a higher share of public and private resources on their elderly populations. All figures presented here are rounded to the nearest one and are based on baseline demographic projections available in: European Commission, "Report on the Impact of Demographic Change" (Accessed October 27, 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/report-impact-demographic-change-reader-friendly-version-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/report-impact-demographic-change-reader-friendly-version-0_en).

237 Helma Lutz and Ewa Palenga-Möllnbeck, "Care Work Migration in Germany: Semi-Compliance and Complicity." *Social Policy and Society* 9 no. 3 (2010) 419-430.

238 It should be noted that not all home-based migrant care workers are informally employed. For example, migrants employed in outpatient care organisations can be tasked with visiting elderly care clients and delivering care services in the latter's homes. See, for example, European Commission, "Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion," Personal and household services - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1427&langId=en>.

239 European Commission. "Commission Staff Working Document on Exploiting the Employment Potential of the Personal and Household Services". SWD (2012) 95, Strasbourg, 18 April 2012. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7623&langId=en>.

240 Jeroen Spijker and Pilar Zueras, "Old-Age Care Provision in Spain in the Context of a New System of Long-Term Care and a Lingering Economic Crisis," *Journal of Population Ageing* 13, no. 1 (November 9, 2018): pp. 41-62, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12062-018-9232-8>. Professional care and domestic services are defined as those provided when, due to a health problem, "care recipients received in their own home any professional or paid help with personal care or with domestic tasks, or meals-on-wheels service" (p. 46)

241 Oxfam, "Raising their Voices Against Precariousness: Women's Experiences of in-work Poverty in Europe" (Oxfam International, 2018), [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf).

addition, a minority of migrants also work within Spain's publicly regulated care system (including hospitals and nursing homes).

Spain's traditional model of care, which transfers the responsibility and burden of care to women, cannot meet current needs. Growing demand for social care service has been driven by the decline of the traditional family model as its members have geographically dispersed and female labour market participation has increased. This trend is likely to continue, given the country's ageing population and increased longevity. At the beginning of 2019, almost one-fifth of the population (19.4 per cent) - about 9.1 million people - were aged over 65, with just over two million living alone.<sup>242</sup> Of those, 72.3 per cent were women. Public care data shows a care gap in Spain. In 2019, 1.3 million people were living in institutionally recognised dependency, 19 per cent of whom did not receive public care.<sup>243</sup>

Since 2006, public care services have been provided through the System for Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Assistance for Persons in Situations of Dependency (*El sistema de Promoción de la Autonomía personal y atención a la dependencia* - SAAD). SAAD delivers care through a network of public and privately-run centres and services. In principle, individuals assessed as being "dependent" can access publicly subsidised telecare services, help at home, day centres, nursing and other outpatient services, and financial support for hiring personal care assistants. In practice, public care coverage is insufficient and requires high co-payments from users. Moreover, the system is characterised by a 'dependency limbo', wherein thousands of those eligible for public care services do not receive them in practice.<sup>244</sup>

Spain also has a large home care sector. Given Spanish men's limited involvement in caregiving and limited public care provision, care provided by an estimated 483,000 home care workers is essential,<sup>245</sup> of which only 376,900 people are registered in Spain's official domestic workers' social security scheme (see Figure 5:2). Since the end of the 1990s, the work performed by domestic workers, which currently represents 9 per cent of total female salaried employment and one fifth of immigrant female employment in Spain, has enabled middle-class Spanish women to participate in the labour market.<sup>246,247</sup>

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242 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, "Press Release: Continuous Household Survey (CHS) - Year 2019" (Continuous Household Survey, 2020), [https://www.ine.es/en/prensa/ech\\_2019\\_en.pdf](https://www.ine.es/en/prensa/ech_2019_en.pdf).

243 Consejo Económico Y Social España Departamento De Publicaciones (Economic And Social Council Spain Publications Department), "El Sistema De Promoción De La Autonomía Personal Y Atención A Las Personas En Situación De Dependencia (The System Of Promotion Of Personal Autonomy And Attention To People In A Situation Of Dependence)" (2020), <http://www.ces.es/documents/10180/5226728/inf0320.pdf/f01ebb9a-c9a2-e62a-ad6b-61a39a844fe4>.

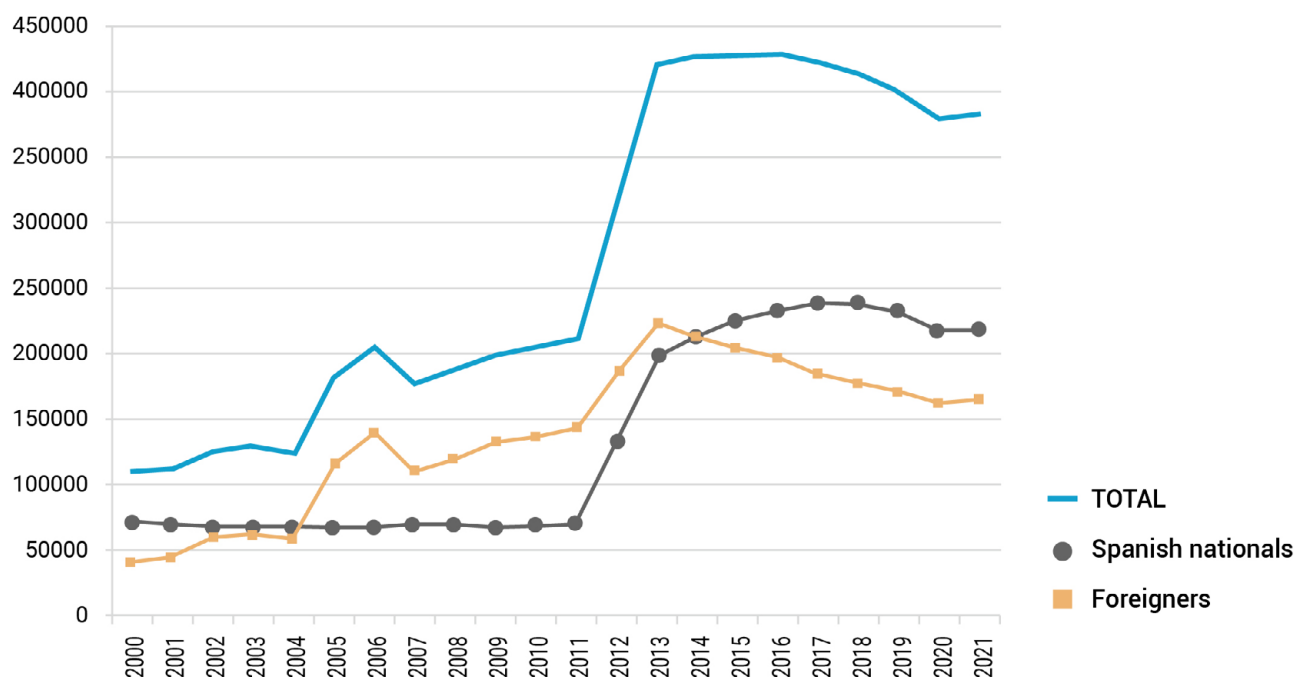
244 Luz María Peña-Longobardo, Juan Oliva-Moreno, Sandra García-Armesto, and Cristina Hernández-Quevedo, 'The Spanish Long-Term Care System in Transition: Ten Years since the 2006 Dependency Act', *Health Policy*, 120 (2016), 1177–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2016.08.012>

245 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Última Nota de prensa: Encuesta de población activa" (INE, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2021), [https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica\\_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595](https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595)

246 Consejo Económico Y Social España, "Informe: la participación laboral de las mujeres en España" (Consejo Económico Y Social España, May 2016), <http://www.ces.es/documents/10180/3557409/Inf0516.pdf>.

247 Domestic workers according to ILO Convention No 189, are defined as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship, whether for one or more households, but a person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker. Of the 483,000 domestic workers in Spain, 96 per cent are women and 42 per cent are migrants. Though survey data does not disaggregate the share of domestic workers exclusively engaged in care work, an estimated 85,000 female workers (both migrant and Spanish national) are engaged in the care of dependent persons. Of these, some 10,000 are live-in home care workers.

**Figure 5:1: Registered domestic workers in Spain<sup>248</sup>**



Source: [Índice General: Afiliación de trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social](#) (Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), 2021).

Approximately 42 per cent of domestic workers registered in the social security system are migrants and almost all are female.<sup>249</sup> However, the share of domestic workers who also provide care services is difficult to ascertain. Migrant women are much more likely to be employed as domestic workers than Spanish women (9.7 per cent compared to 1.6 per cent).<sup>250</sup>

An estimated 36 per cent of Spanish domestic workers are irregularly hired. The domestic sector has the lowest pay of any sector in the economy (44% of average wages), high rates of temporary, part-time jobs, moonlighting and lower social security safeguards. This explains the higher rates of poverty found among its workers. An estimated 32.5 per cent live below the poverty line and one in six domestic workers live in extreme poverty.<sup>251</sup>

Social security data suggests that the majority of domestic workers are nationals of countries outside the EU (72.2 per cent), mainly women from Latin American countries (mainly Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru). Among EU nationals, Romanians are the largest group of domestic workers, and are also the

248 Source: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social” (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>. Explanatory note: The category ‘Spanish nationals’ also contains migrant workers who have obtained Spanish nationality. Over the last few years, many workers of Latin American origin have been granted dual nationality due to the special advantages that Spanish immigration legislation offers to these groups compared to other nationalities. Thus, especially in the case of female workers in the domestic work sector, if organisations were to provide the data on affiliation “by country of origin”, the weight of ‘foreigners’ in the total population of domestic workers would be higher. In addition, this graph only captures registered workers - irregular employment, which is very high in both sectors and mostly comprises migrant workers, is also hidden in this graph.

249 Please note that the definition used to construct the statistical category of ‘migrants’ in the datasets used by Spain’s Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations undercounts the actual share of migrants in Spain’s local workforce. It excludes migrants with irregular status, and counts naturalised citizens as Spanish nationals, rather than migrants.

250 Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), “Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social” (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

251 Oxfam, “Raising their voices against precariousness: women’s experiences of in-work poverty in Europe” (Oxfam International, 2018), [https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf)



largest single migrant group in the entire sector (18 per cent of registered foreign domestic workers).<sup>252</sup>

Migrant care workers are also employed in the public care system (SAAD), comprising over 20 per cent of employees in home help services and 15 per cent in nursing homes.<sup>253</sup> This work is characterised by a high rate of temporary employment, as well as frequent job changes, and short employment contracts. Due to cost-saving measures by institutional care providers, there is a high proportion of involuntary part-time work in the sector, and a significant percentage of care workers looking for another job due to a shortage of hours.<sup>254</sup> In fact, many care workers prefer being employed in the public care system only because of the greater social protection (especially, unemployment benefits) afforded to them compared to the domestic sector.<sup>255</sup>

## Ireland

Ireland has the fastest-ageing population in Europe, with the population aged over 85 growing 4 per cent annually, and the share of people aged over 65 set to reach 28 per cent in 2046 - up from 11 per cent in 2011.<sup>256</sup> Together with the number of people living with dementia and other long-term illnesses, this has resulted in a growing demand for home-based and nursing home care.<sup>257</sup> However, that demand has not corresponded with formalisation of care, in part due to prevailing views about family responsibility, and also due to the unavailability of work permits for carers, which has limited the labour pool available to employers.<sup>258</sup> There are substantial waiting lists for home care services. Almost 8000 people were on the waiting list for publicly-funded home-support services as of January 2020, with the pandemic subsequently further exacerbating delays in receiving care.<sup>259</sup> As of June 2021, the waiting list dropped to 1600, a loss of demand driven by fear that external care staff would expose patients and their relatives to the virus.<sup>260</sup> In any case, needs differ across community healthcare organisations (CHOs) and geographic areas, and it is unclear how demand will shift as restrictions ease.<sup>261</sup>

Ireland's publicly funded Health Service Executive (HSE) provides some needs-based health support for home care and outpatient care provision. However, waiting times for these services can be long and the skills of the staff available and the time allocated may not be sufficient for an individual's needs. The expectation is that

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252 Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), "Índice General: Afiliación De Trabajadores Extranjeros a La Seguridad Social" (Índice general Afiliación de Trabajadores extranjeros a la Seguridad Social, 2021), <https://www.mites.gob.es/estadisticas/bel/AEX/index.htm>.

253 Consejo Económico Y Social España Departamento De Publicaciones (Economic And Social Council Spain Publications Department), "El Sistema De Promoción De La Autonomía Personal Y Atención A Las Personas En Situación De Dependencia (The System Of Promotion Of Personal Autonomy And Attention To People In A Situation Of Dependence)" (2020), <http://www.ces.es/documents/10180/5226728/inf0320.pdf/f01ebb9a-c9a2-e62a-ad6b-61a39a844fe4>.

254 Margarita Maestripieri, "So Close, so Far? Part-Time Employment and Its Effects on Gender Equality in Italy and Spain" *In Dualisation of Part-Time Work: The Development of Labour Market Insiders and Outsiders*, edited by Heidi Nicolaisen, Hanne Kavli, and Ragnhild Steen Jensen. (Policy Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447348603.001.0001>. According to the author, involuntary non-standard work (including part-time, and fixed-term contracts) characterises the employment of 23.7% of all those employed in Spain's education and care sector.

255 Interviews ES.23 and ES.26.

256 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), "Preparing for the Elder Boom in Ireland" (MRCI, 2015), <https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf>

257 *ibid*

258 The Home Care Coalition, "The Home Care Coalition: Experiences from the Grassroots" (2019), [https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/19.09.23\\_homecarecoalition\\_experiencesofhomecare\\_v2.pdf](https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/19.09.23_homecarecoalition_experiencesofhomecare_v2.pdf).

259 Eoghan Murphy, "Waiting List for HSE Homecare Rises to Nearly 8,000" *Newstalk*. (Newstalk, January 29, 2020), <https://www.newstalk.com/news/waiting-list-hse-homecare-958820>.

260 Michelle McGlynn, "Over 1,600 Waiting for Home Support Packages after an 80% Drop during Pandemic." (Irish Examiner, June 10, 2021), <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40310255.html>.

261 In their 2019 budget submission, Home and Community Care Ireland (HCCI), the industry organisation that represents Ireland's private care providers, cited the National Skills Bulletin 2018, which estimated that 6,700 people were employed as: "[c]are workers, home carers, etc." in 2017, representing 51 per cent of all social and care occupations (p. 3-4). HCCI also noted that: "demand is expected to increase across almost all areas where HCAs [healthcare assistants] are employed, though this is particularly acute in the case of home care." One reason for this increase will be the introduction of the statutory scheme for home care, a key principle in health care reform. See: Brendan Walsh & Seán Lyons, "Demand for the statutory home support scheme. Dublin" (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 2021), <https://www.esri.ie/publications/demand-for-the-statutory-home-care-scheme>

family members and private care service providers supplement public care services. The lack of affordable care has enabled the proliferation of an unregulated informal home-based elderly care market reliant on cheap care services provided by migrants and refugees.<sup>262</sup>

Private care providers dominate the care system. An estimated 38 per cent of care workers are employed by private providers and a further 11 per cent in publicly funded private care institutions. Only 25 per cent of care workers are employed by public sector providers, and 6 per cent are employed by care charities.<sup>263</sup> Between 2003 and 2014, there was a reported 49 per cent increase in private nursing home beds facilitated by tax breaks for building private nursing homes. At the same time, a lack of investment in public nursing homes has led to a decrease in public beds from around 9,000 to 6,656.<sup>264</sup>

Much of Ireland's public care service provision operates through private service providers, which, by some accounts, affords the state increased flexibility in terms of controlling its care provision costs.<sup>265</sup> Approximately 75 per cent of private care sector revenue is estimated to be obtained from the HSE and 25 per cent from out-of-pocket payments.<sup>266</sup> Providers registered with the membership organisation, Home and Community Care Ireland<sup>267</sup> (HCCI), care for 21,000 clients, of which 13,000 are funded by the HSE and 8,000 paid directly. However, a significant proportion of them also receive publicly funded home care services.<sup>268</sup>

The high cost of private care and long waiting times for limited and publicly funded home care have contributed to increased demand for affordable private home care. 34.5 per cent of care workers in Ireland are employed in home care.<sup>269</sup> This figure is likely to underestimate the number of informal carers, many of whom are migrants not officially 'employed' as carers.

Recognising the longstanding problems regarding access and affordability in both areas of the care economy, the Irish government's 2022 budget committed to increasing the number of publicly funded hours of home care and to helping creches remain solvent while not raising fees. For childcare, the government will continue subsidies for childcare hours as well as extend their availability to parents until the age of 15. The government will also support improving working and operating conditions in the sector in exchange for a freeze on fees, which will help parents. The overall commitment until 2028 is supposed to total €1 billion.<sup>270</sup>

More specifically, the government announced that from September 2022, a new funding stream will assist providers "in meeting their operating costs, including increased costs related to improved quality measures." The funding will also enhance "the quality of services by better enabling providers to attract and retain qualified

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262 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), "Preparing for the Elder Boom in Ireland" (MRCI, 2015), <https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf>

263 Karl Conyard, Mary Codd, Alison Metcalfe, Siobhán Corish, Jackie Flannery, and Paul Hannon, "Healthcare Assistants and Qualified Carers, A Trained, but Untapped Underutilised Resource: A Population-Based Study in Ireland of Skillset, Career Satisfaction, Wellbeing and Change across All Sectors and Care Settings" (2020): 50-52, <https://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/11457>. Note that public sector carers include individuals who work for public sector care institutions and locum agencies.

264 Daniel Molinuevo and Robert Anderson, "Care Homes for Older Europeans: Public, for-Profit and Nonprofit Providers" (Europa, 2017), [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1723en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1723en.pdf).

265 Interview with former government officials, cited in, Julien Mercille, and Nicholas O'Neill, "The Growth of Private Home Care Providers in Europe: The Case of Ireland" Vol. 55: 606-21, (2021), <https://publicpolicy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Growth-of-private-home-care-providers-in-Europe.pdf>.

266 Ibid. From a funding standpoint, Mercille and O'Neill show a significant rise in public expenditure on private home care in Ireland: from €3 million in 2006 to €176 million in 2019. This contrasts with the expenditure directed at public (HSE) and non-profit home care providers, which has increased only slightly during this period.

267 Home and Community Care Ireland, "About HCCI: Mission Statement, Membership, Standards, Care Finder and Resources," About HCCI (Home and Community Care Ireland, February 3, 2020), <https://hcci.ie/>.

268 Ibid

269 Karl Conyard, Mary Codd, Alison Metcalfe, Siobhán Corish, Jackie Flannery, and Paul Hannon, "Healthcare Assistants and Qualified Carers, A Trained, but Untapped Underutilised Resource: A Population-Based Study in Ireland of Skillset, Career Satisfaction, Wellbeing and Change across All Sectors and Care Settings" (2020), <https://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/11457>

270 Minister O'Gorman Announces 'Transformative' €183 Million Budget Package" (Government of Ireland, October 12, 2021d. Government of Ireland), <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/c2a83-minister-ogorman-announces-transformative-183-million-budget-package/#>.

staff; establish career structures; introduce or improve other features of provision that are demonstrated to contribute to quality (e.g. non-contact time, planning, training, curriculum implementation).<sup>271</sup> To further protect providers, the government has allowed them to continue to access the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme until April 2022. A Transition Fund will also be available from May until August 2022 to ensure providers will not have to raise fees before the new funding stream starts.<sup>272</sup>

The government has also pledged a continuation of extra funding for home support, especially for people with dementia and is piloting a scheme in four locations that includes greater regulation, IT, and training as well as funding for an additional 230,000 hours in a six-month period.<sup>273</sup> The government announced a continuation of the €150 million in 2021 for 5 million additional hours of home support, with 11% in 2022 allocated specifically for patients with dementia. In addition, its 2022 budget offered €17.6 million for enhanced community support teams, safe staffing and safeguarding of residents, as well as investment in falls and fractures liaison services and intensive home support packages. To protect families paying for care, the government has amended the 2009 nursing homes support scheme. Once an individual has been in nursing home care for three years, the government will no longer assess the value of family-owned farms and businesses against the cost of paying for nursing home fees, as long as a family member is working on the farm or business owned by the individual.<sup>274</sup>

Migrant employment figures within Ireland's care system are not readily available. An estimated 22 per cent of carers working in households or in residential care facilities were born outside Ireland.<sup>275</sup> Migrant women work in elderly care due to the ease of acquiring the Healthcare Assistant qualification (QQI Level 5) and finding jobs through social networks.<sup>276</sup> Migrants, mostly women, work in both residential and home care, although there is very little data to confirm this. Until recently, the Irish government has only allowed very limited recruitment of trained care workers from outside the EEA to meet the growing labour needs of the care sector.<sup>277</sup> A consequence is that Irish families end up relying on the services of migrant home care workers employed on an informal basis. Moreover, the informal home care sector is home to a disproportionate share of refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented TCNs. Most have few other occupational options due to the lack of any professional care qualifications and their restrictive legal status in Ireland.<sup>278</sup> Lack of accurate data means that this informal economy is not understood properly.

Even within the formal home care sector, limited regulation of service provision means that home carers may not have the skills necessary to care for their clients. As with informal care, the working arrangements, already typically for 'unsocial' hours, may be difficult for migrant workers, who hesitate to complain because they fear losing their employment. MRCI has reported consistently in its own research that migrant workers are given clients that are distant from where they live or have physical conditions they are not prepared to

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271 *ibid*

272 *ibid*

273 "Minister for Mental Health and Older People Announces Further Increases on Mental Health and Older Persons Funding in Budget 2022" (Government of Ireland, October 14, 2021. Government of Ireland), <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/aa94f-minister-for-mental-health-and-older-people-announces-further-increases-on-mental-health-and-older-persons-funding-in-budget-2022/>.

274 "Minister for Mental Health and Older People Announces Selection of 4 Sites for New Home Support Pilot." *Gov.ie*. Government of Ireland, July 23, 2021. Government of Ireland. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/11c2f-minister-for-mental-health-and-older-people-announces-selection-of-four-sites-for-new-home-support-pilot/>.

275 Brendan Walsh & Seán Lyons, "Demand for the statutory home support scheme. Dublin" (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 2021), <https://www.esri.ie/publications/demand-for-the-statutory-home-care-scheme>

276 Matt Farrah. "What Qualifications Do You Need to Be a Healthcare Assistant in Ireland?" *healthcarejobs.ie*, (May 4, 2021), [https://www.healthcarejobs.ie/blog/what-qualifications-do-you-need-to-be-a-healthcare-assistant-in-ireland/?gclid=CjwKCAjwj8eJBhA5EiwAg3z0m\\_PH90EHiybu\\_TOjBRURPiXK4Tbvcwo1JQM4Md4Vd1\\_FsnDhjoL0AxoCc\\_oQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.healthcarejobs.ie/blog/what-qualifications-do-you-need-to-be-a-healthcare-assistant-in-ireland/?gclid=CjwKCAjwj8eJBhA5EiwAg3z0m_PH90EHiybu_TOjBRURPiXK4Tbvcwo1JQM4Md4Vd1_FsnDhjoL0AxoCc_oQAvD_BwE).

277 Last June, Ireland's Minister of State for Employment announced that Nursing homes and other health sector employers will be permitted to recruit staff from outside the EEA under changes to the work-permit system announced by the Government. See: Martin Wall, "Committee Told Meat Industry Will Continue to Need Workers from Abroad," (The Irish Times, April 12, 2021), <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/committee-told-meat-industry-will-continue-to-need-workers-from-abroad-1.4535257>.

278 By contrast, in Italy, migrant live-in carers—and especially migrants with irregular status—may constitute three-quarters of the total home care workforce. <https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf>.

manage.<sup>279</sup>

## Germany

The majority of migrant care workers in Germany are employed in informal, 'live-in' home care. They are mostly from eastern European countries and make up almost all the 24 hour carers in this sector.<sup>280</sup> However, they are also increasingly found in the formal care sector, working in both in- and outpatient services. In 2020, 13 per cent of the formal care workforce was made up of migrants.<sup>281</sup>

Migrant care workers therefore increasingly fill gaps in both formal and informal care provision.<sup>282</sup> Acting alongside private care companies, the government has actively legislated to introduce professional workers from outside the EEA into the care system. The majority come from other EU-countries (especially from Poland, Croatia and Romania), from the Balkan states (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Turkey.<sup>283</sup> The number of asylum seekers/refugees in the formal care sector has also been growing: from less than 2000 in 2015 to 13,000 in 2020.<sup>284</sup>

Migrants play a much greater role in informal home care in which 80 per cent of care recipients are cared for. Although the welfare system provides cash allowances to cover family-based and outpatient care services, they do not cover the cost of full-time nursing care at home. As a result, a large-scale, informal care economy operates partially illegally, staffed almost exclusively by female migrant care workers who provide relatively cheap, 24-hour live-in care. Intermediate companies play key roles in recruiting migrants for this type of work, contributing to the rise of a new, transnational service market of care characterised by the absence of regulation and exploitative working conditions.

Live-in care workers in Germany conform to a circular migration model. They work for six to 10 weeks, and then return to their home country for a similar length of time. While at home, they are replaced by another migrant care worker. Most live-in workers come from the EU bloc's eastern and south-eastern countries, although in recent years, there has been an increase in workers from outside the EU (especially women from Ukraine). However, Poland remains the largest sending country by far.<sup>285</sup> Overall, an estimated 300-600,000 migrants work in informal live-in care, which means that they may be employed in 8-10 per cent of households with a person in need of care.<sup>286</sup> As in Ireland, Germany's restrictive immigration policies have meant that the informal live-in care sector has become an occupational niche for undocumented workers.

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279 *ibid* p. 6.

280 Aranka Vanessa Benazha, "Verunsichtbart, prekär, systemrelevant. Transnational erbrachte Live-in-Betreuung in Deutschland" (Insecure, precarious, systemically relevant. Transnationally provided live-in care in Germany). *Impulse Für Gesundheitsförderung Online*, no. 108 (2020): 7–8.

281 *ibid*

282 In 2020, migrant workers comprised 11 per cent of Germany's formal care workforce. Specifically within the formal elderly care system, 15 per cent (91,000) of employees were migrant workers in 2020, compared to 8 per cent in 2015.

283 The recruitment of citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North-Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia is facilitated through a temporary special regulation - the so-called "Westbalkanregelung".

284 Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Statistics of the Federal Employment Agency), "Reports: Focus on the Labour Market. Labour Market Situation in the Care Sector" (May, 2021), [https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?__blob=publicationFile). The figures refer to asylum seekers/refugees from the top eight refugee origin countries.

285 Helma Lutz, "Vom Weltmarkt in den Privathaushalt: Die neuen Dienst mädchen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung", (Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2007). Please note that the informal employment arrangements governing live-in care work in Germany mean that there are no precise figures on the country origin of live-in care workers. One estimate, however, puts the number of Polish informal care workers in Germany at anywhere between 200,000 and 500,000. See, Agnieszka Sowa-Kofta, "Central and Eastern European Countries in the Migrant Care Chain: Expert Group Meeting on "Care and Older Persons: Links to Decent Work, Migration and Gender", (2017), [https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2017/11/Care-migration-in-CEEC\\_Agnieszka.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2017/11/Care-migration-in-CEEC_Agnieszka.pdf)

286 See, Volker Hielscher, Sabine Kirchen-Peters, Lukas Nock, and Max Ischebeck, "Pflege in Den Eigenen Vier Wänden: Zeitaufwand Und Kosten (Care in Your Own Four Walls: Time Expenditure and Costs)" (Hans Böckler Stiftung (Hans Böckler Foundation, June 2017), [https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p\\_study\\_hbs\\_363.pdf](https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_study_hbs_363.pdf).; and Vanessa Aranka Benazha, "Verunsichtbart, prekär, systemrelevant. Transnational erbrachte Live-in-Betreuung in Deutschland" (Insecure, precarious, systemically relevant. Transnationally provided live-in care in Germany)" *Impulse Für Gesundheitsförderung Online*, no. 108 (2020): 7–8.

By contrast, public provision plays a more important role in Germany's formal care system, which includes institutional services such as inpatient and outpatient care in hospitals and nursing centres. Established through successive reforms in the early 1990s, the current care system was transformed from a state-provided, tax-financed system to an insurance-based one. Individuals in need of care (or their family members) receive transfer payments to finance outpatient nursing care or care by family members at home.

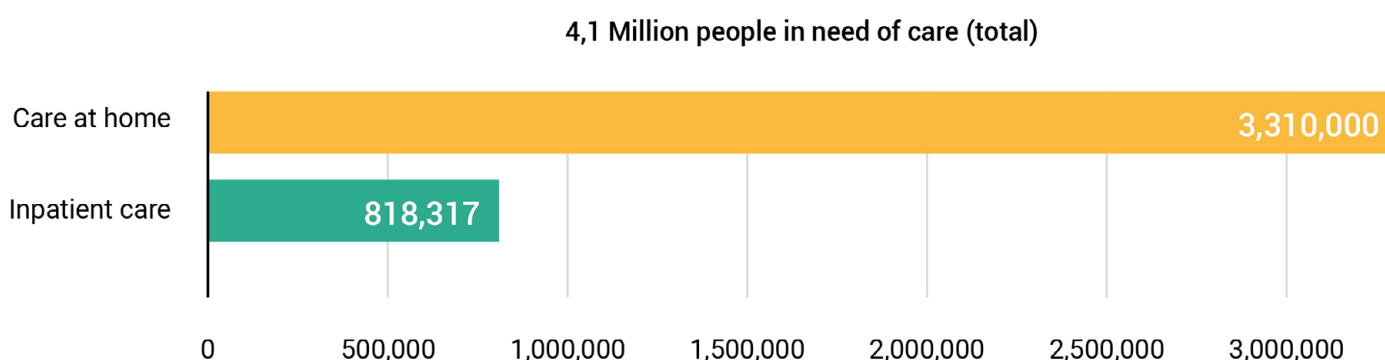
This insurance system has several limitations. First, it provides only partial care coverage, leading many to buy additional insurance. Second, it is insufficient to pay for 24-hour care. Furthermore, home care is preferred over outpatient care due to the dislike of being cared for by a turnover of different carers. However, this is based on a series of assumptions that are no longer borne out: that family (and especially women) are still able to care for elderly relatives, that families live in spatial proximity and that only a few hours of home care are needed. The high costs and limited state provision of home care underlies the growing demand for informal, private home care services in Germany.

As a result, a parallel and informal system of live-in care exists, which is strongly dominated by female migrant workers. While official data on the informal sector are missing, it is, unquestionably, a core feature of the German care landscape. Largely situated outside its regulatory control, this informal system is officially reprimanded, but tacitly tolerated by the state.

The growing demand for home care exists in the context of increasing demographic pressures on the formal care sector. 4.1 million people are currently registered as legally 'in need of care' and eligible for state benefits, this number is expected to rise to 4.7 million in 2060. At the same time, the active working population is set to decrease from 50 million to approximately 35 million.<sup>287</sup> Germany's formal care sector<sup>288</sup> is already experiencing significant labour shortages, which are projected to increase.<sup>289,290</sup>

There is political consensus that comprehensive reorganisation of Germany's care system is needed. However, only limited reform has so far been proposed. This has focused on inpatient and outpatient care, despite 80 per cent of care recipients (3.3 million people) being cared for at home, with two million of those receiving care exclusively from family members and informal live-in carers (Figure 5:1).

**Figure 5:2: Types of care arrangements in Germany**

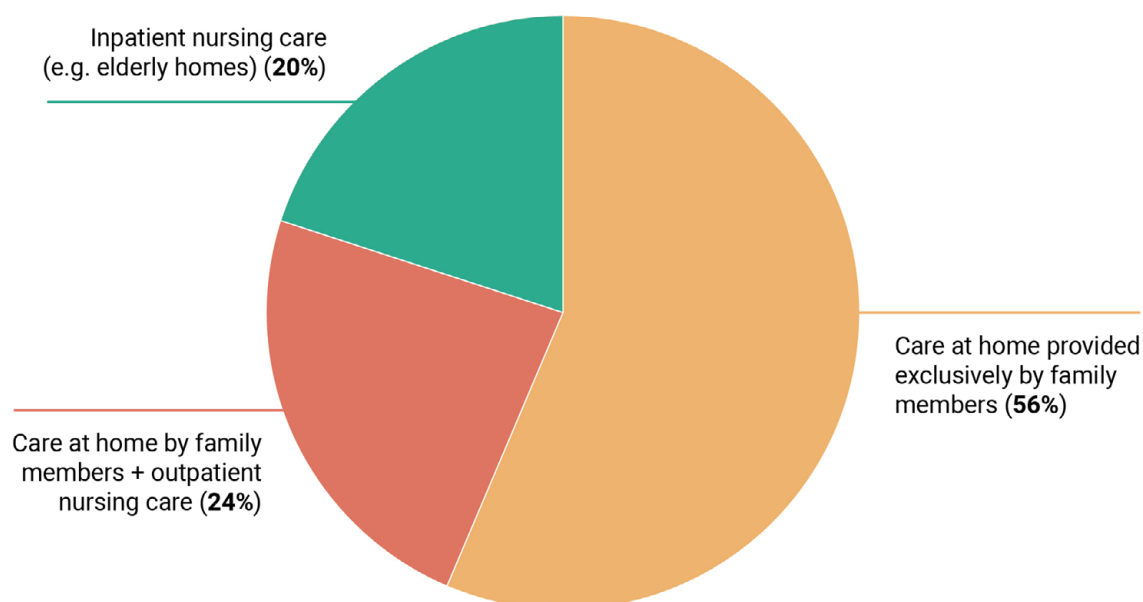


287 Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Statistics of the Federal Employment Agency), Reports: Focus on the Labour Market. Labour Market Situation in the Care Sector" (May, 2021), [https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).

288 Including hospitals, elderly care homes and outpatient nursing services.

289 Lukas Meya, "Nur wenige Geflüchtete arbeiten bislang in Pflegeberufen (Few refugees working in care professions so far)" (MDR, 9 March 2021), <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/deutschland/gesellschaft/fachkraeftemangel-altenpflege-gefluechtete-100.html>.

290 CORRECTIV Publication, "Nurses for Sale" (2020), <https://correctiv.org/en/latest-stories/2020/11/25/nurses-for-sale/>.



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), "Long-Term Care," Federal Statistical Office, 2020, [https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Health/Long-Term-Care/\\_node.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Health/Long-Term-Care/_node.html).

## Greece

Demand for paid domestic and care services in Greece began to grow in the 1980s and has accelerated since the 1990s. Initially, internal migration of women from rural areas provided these services to urban households. However, as more Greek women participated in the labour market, more migrant women filled positions in the care and domestic service sector as part of Greece's transformation to a net-immigration country. It reflected the country's underdeveloped public social services sector and traditional emphasis on the role of the family as the core provider of social care.<sup>291</sup>

Against this backdrop, the growing entry of female migrants into the domestic sector has made domestic care - including elderly and childcare - more affordable.<sup>292</sup> Home care is highly unregulated. In more remote and depopulated rural areas, migrant workers have been employed in older households, with care work primarily assigned to women migrants.<sup>293</sup> Most originate from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Philippines.

Greece's elderly population has grown significantly over the past decades. In 2020, 22 per cent of the population were aged above 65.<sup>294</sup> Greek women's growing participation in the labour market combined with the country's southern European 'welfare regime' - characterised by underdeveloped social services and emphasis on the family's role as the core unit of social care - help explain the sustained growth in

291 Russell King, Gabriella Lazaridis, Charalambos G. Tsardanidis, and R Fakiolas, "Migration and Unregistered Labour in the Greek Economy." In *Eldorado or Fortress: Migration in Southern Europe*, 57–78. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, (2000); Katrougalos, George, and Gabriella Lazaridis. *Southern European Welfare States*, (2003).

292 Antigone Lyberaki, "Migrant Women, Care Work, and Women's Employment in Greece." *Feminist Economics*, 17 no.3 (2011) 103-131.

293 Charalambos Kasimis, , Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, and Ersi Zacoboulou, "Migrants in Rural Greece." *Sociologia Ruralis* 43, no. 2 (2003): 167–84, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00237>. ; Charalambos Kasimis, and Apostolos G Papadopoulos. "The Multifunctional Role of Migrants in the Greek Countryside: Implications for the Rural Economy and Society." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 99–127.

294 World Bank staff estimates based on age/sex distributions of United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects. Greece's aged-population share is higher than that of most other EU countries. See: The World Bank, "Population Ages 65 and above (% of Total Population) - Greece." The World Bank, (2019), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.65UP.TO.ZS?end=2020&locations=GR&start=1960&view=chart>.

home-based care and domestic services.<sup>295</sup> In 2012, 63.5 per cent of the care workforce were employed by households (compared to 21.6 per cent in EU-27 countries), and only 10.5 per cent by formal care sector providers (compared to 37.8 per cent in EU-27).<sup>296</sup>

The day to day responsibilities of home care workers can easily overlap with more domestic roles, such as cleaning, shopping and gardening. An analysis of the 2011 Population Census data reveals that 'care services' alone employed 43,377 people in 2011, while the 'domestic cleaning' sub-sector employed approximately 56,059.<sup>297</sup>

In Greece's home care sector, there are both live-in and live-out carers for the elderly, children and individuals with disabilities. Both roles have different conditions of employment and related eligibility for social security rights.<sup>298</sup> Care services are also provided by the formal care sector of private, public and voluntary organisations at the local and national levels, with varying eligibility criteria, including day care centres and the "Aid at Home" programme for the elderly and those with disabilities who live alone. These programmes are established and operated by local government, as well as for-profit and non-profit organisations. Municipal authorities throughout Greece also run centres for the elderly. Each centre provides social and medical care services to residents living in the adjacent area who are over 60 years of age, regardless of their financial and social situation.<sup>299,300</sup>

Migrants occupy a disproportionate share of the care workforce in Greece. Initially, when Greece first transitioned into a net-immigration country in the 1990s, Filipino and Albanian women took up most employment in the broader sector, including in care. Gradually, however, the category of female domestic workers began to show significant differentiation, with specific migrant nationalities being employed for particular domestic work (e.g. live-in care).<sup>301</sup> Over time, network recruitment processes have reinforced the participation of migrant women in the care and domestic sectors. This helped significantly reduce the cost of private care, making elderly care and childcare financially accessible for middle-class families.<sup>302</sup> Migrants working in the care sector include individuals employed full or part time in households providing services to elderly people or children, as well as formal and informal employees of nursing homes. As is the case in the care sector more generally, migrants' responsibilities are seldom restricted to narrow care tasks and usually have additional responsibilities.

The migrant care workforce in Greece comprises a broad range of nationalities. The significant overlap that exists between domestic and care roles - and the presence of a sizeable number of irregularly employed migrant care workers - makes it difficult to estimate the precise share of migrant care workers in the labour force. Data from the 2011 census shows that Greece's 'narrow care services' sub-sector employs 16.7 per cent of the total number of its employees. The 'domestic cleaning' sub-sector employs 78.1 per cent of the total. To the extent that these two sub-sectors combined are considered to make up the broader care sector, it can be estimated that up to 51 per cent of people employed in paid care work in Greece are migrants, with

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295 Russell King, Gabriella Lazaridis, Charalambos G. Tsardanidis, and R. Fakiolas, "Chapter 3: Migration and Unregistered Labour in the Greek Economy." Essay. In *Eldorado or Fortress: Migration in Southern Europe*, 57–78. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.; George Katrougalos, and Gabriella Lazaridis. *Southern European Welfare States*, 2003.; Antigone Lyberaki, "Migrant Women, Care Work, and Women's Employment in Greece" *Feminist Economics*, 17 no.3 (2011) 103-131.

296 Alessio Cangiano, "Elder Care and Migrant Labor in Europe: A Demographic Outlook" *Population and Development Review* 40 (2014):131–154. doi:10.1111/j.1728-4457.2014.00653.x.

297 These figures are based on an analysis conducted for this report

298 This is based on interview ML.4, with the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), which is the highest, tertiary trade union body in Greece

299 European Commission, "Greece: Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion" Greece - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. (European Commission, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1112&langId=en&intPagId=4570>).

300 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, "Ηλικιωμένοι" (Υπουργείο Εργασίας και Κοινωνικών Υποθέσεων, June 2, 2021), <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/koinoniki-allilengyi/iikiomenoi/>.

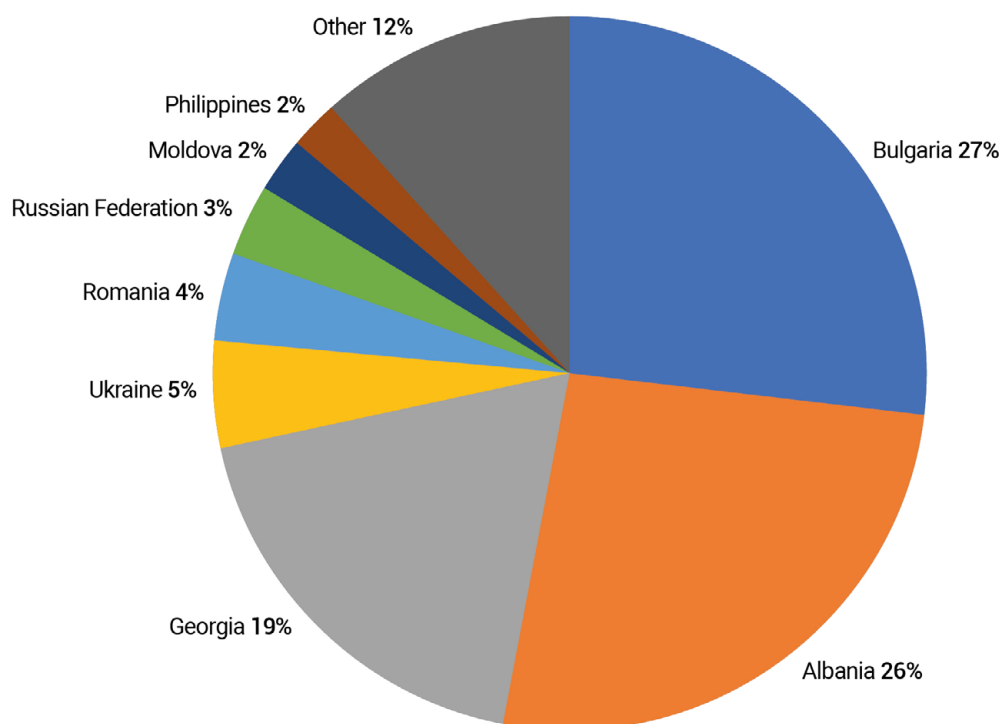
301 Pinelopi Topali, "Constructions of Care in Modern Greece: Gendered Relationships between Filipina Domestic Workers and Greek Employers." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 1 (2009): 94–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2009.11666062>.

302 Antigone Lyberaki, "Migrant Women, Care Work, and Women's Employment in Greece". *Feminist Economics*, 17 no.3 (2011) 103-131.

over 95 per cent of them women.<sup>303</sup>

The nationalities of migrant workers employed in domestic cleaning and care services are very similar (Figures 5:3 and 5:4), - Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Georgian, and Filipino - evidencing the overlap between them. Three quarters (77.4 per cent) of those employed in the broader care sector are aged between 35-64 and one fifth (20.5 per cent) aged between 15 and 34. One fifth have tertiary education (20 per cent), nearly half (46 per cent) have upper secondary education and one third (34 per cent) have lower secondary education only.

**Figure 5:3: Migrant employees in the 'narrow care sector' by nationality, 2011 (Greece)**

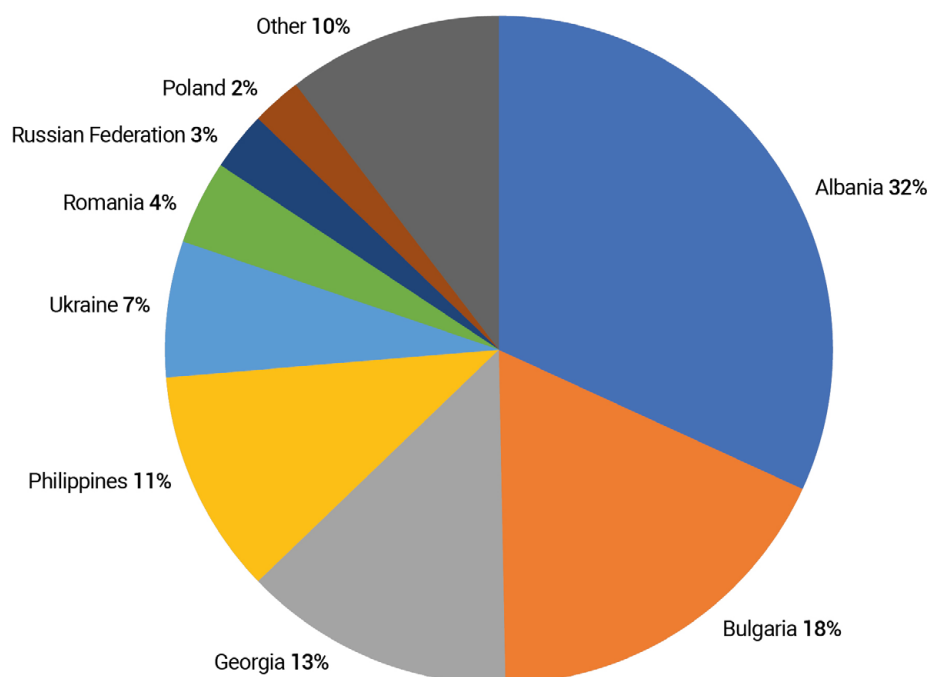


Source: [ELSTAT](#), Population Census (2011), unpublished data (own elaboration)

<sup>303</sup> All figures on migrant employment in the domestic and 'narrow care services' sub sectors are based on census data analysis conducted by the authors of this report. The figure given for the share of migrants in both sub sectors (51 per cent) is a top range estimate that includes individuals employed in both domestic cleaning and care services, as there are no disaggregated data.



**Figure 5:4: Migrant employees in the domestic sector by nationality, 2011 (Greece)**



Source: [ELSTAT](#), Population Census (2011), unpublished data (own elaboration)

Reliance on migrant care work is likely to keep growing as demand for care services continues to increase in Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain. However, the extent to which care can be dependent on cheap, and often irregular, migrant labour, is unclear. This reflects a larger problem across the EU, namely the need for a more comprehensive and holistic policy response to population ageing that connects a skilled, well-paid labour force to hospital, residential care, and home care services.<sup>304</sup>

### 5.3 Migrant workers' social rights

Although migrant workers are instrumental in care provision, employment laws and regulations are often inferior to those that protect the local labour force. Depending on their host country and individual legal status, they face different forms of exclusion from social rights and labour protections. The most severe exclusions are generally experienced by migrants with irregular statuses.<sup>305</sup>

Although irregular migrants are afforded some labour protections by the EU and specific member states, in practice, their precarious legal positions render them highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by

304 Trinity College Dublin, "The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing" (TILDA and TCD, 2021), <https://tilda.tcd.ie/>; See also: European Commission, "Commission Staff Working Document on Exploiting the Employment Potential of the Personal and Household Services" Strasbourg. (Accessed October 27, 2021)

305 The term 'irregular migrants' includes 'undocumented' migrant workers (i.e those with no legal right to stay in a host country) as well as those with legal residence (temporary or permanent) but no right to work in their host country. In practice, migrant workers can fall into a broad range of 'irregular' and 'illegal' statuses, each with its own associated forms of exclusions. It should also be noted that some forms of irregularity are tacitly approved by state authorities as a way of meeting care needs with minimal loss of state resources and political support. This applies for example to informal care workers employed in Germany. For helpful discussions of different forms of irregular/illegal employment among migrant care workers in the countries examined in this report, see: Lutz, Helma, and Ewa Palenga-Möllnbeck. "Care Work Migration in Germany: Semi-Compliance and Complicity." *Social Policy & Society* 9, no. 3 (2010); Anna Triandafyllidou and Dita Vogel, "Irregular Migration in the European Union: Evidence, Facts and Myths" In *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme.*, edited by Helma Lutz, 291–300, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010); Susan Whelan, Emma Quinn, and Samantha Arnold, "Illegal Employment of Non-EU Nationals in Ireland" (ESRI, 2017), <https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RS64.pdf>; Maurizio Ambrosini, "Irregular Migration and Invisible Welfare," In *Irregular Migration and Invisible Welfare* (2016).

employers. They also tend to be excluded from broader statutory mechanisms of social protection, such as social security and unemployment benefits.<sup>306</sup>

Irregular migrant workers make up a significant share of the home care workforce in the countries examined. Their work is almost always undeclared.<sup>307</sup> Therefore, they may work for extended periods of time without accumulating any pension rights, facing poverty once they retire or if forced to stop working due to illness or disability.

In Greece, for example, lack of pension rights for migrant care workers has become an increasingly prominent issue of public concern. Many previously irregular migrants, who have worked as carers since the 1990s, currently find themselves denied a pension by the Greek state. As one Albanian care worker put it:

“I think social security is an open wound for Greece still. It would be better for the state and for us to have social security. In the end we would have the pension (...) I have worked 27 years in Greece.”<sup>308</sup>

In 2010, under Law 3863/2010,<sup>309</sup> Greece introduced a compulsory, voucher-based payment system (*Ergosimo*), aimed primarily at atypical workers employed as agricultural labourers and domestic workers - including ‘live-out’ home care workers.<sup>310</sup> Although not its original purpose, the scheme is considered one of the few measures adopted to tackle undeclared work in Greece.<sup>311,312</sup> In principle, the scheme requires households to pay live-out care workers using *ergosimo* vouchers, which can only be cashed in post offices and banks, which automatically deduct social security and health insurance contributions on behalf of their employees. The scheme also covers migrants with irregular status and therefore, theoretically, allows them to enjoy social security coverage even though formally they are not legally allowed to work in Greece. In practice, however, only a minority of them have benefited from this. Employer compliance with the *ergosimo* scheme is low, mainly due to the weakness of effective labour law enforcement mechanisms in private household spaces<sup>313</sup> and because use of *ergosimo* requires employers to issue written contracts of employment.<sup>314</sup> Given the prevalence of undeclared work in Greece’s care sector and the absence of proper enforcement mechanisms, few employers are willing to formalise their employment relationships with irregular migrant care workers. Therefore, irregular migrant care workers remain largely excluded from accessing social rights in Greece.

Irregular migrant care workers face similar challenges in Spain. Employing migrants with irregular statuses is

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306 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Severe Labour Exploitation: Workers Moving within or into the European Union. States’ Obligations and Victims’ Rights” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015) <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/severe-labour-exploitation-workers-moving-within-or-european-union>; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Migrants in an Irregular Situation Employed in Domestic Work: Fundamental Rights Challenges for the European Union and Its Member States” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/migrants-irregular-situation-employed-domestic-work-fundamental-rights-challenges>.

307 Williams and Reenoy define ‘undeclared work’ as “... work [that] is not declared to the authorities for tax, social security and/or labour law purposes. This covers diverse paid activities ranging from informal domestic services to clandestine activity conducted by illegal residents”. See Williams, Colin, and Piet Renooy. “Measures to Tackle Undeclared Work in the European Union,” 2008. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2009/working-conditions-labour-market/measures-to-tackle-undeclared-work-in-the-european-union>.

308 Interview ML.7.

309 The original scheme was amended by the following, in sequence: Art.76 para.8, 3996/2011, Art. 74 Law 4144/2013, Law 4670/2020.

310 As mentioned earlier in this section, live-out care workers do not live in the homes of their employers/clients. They tend to work in several households.

311 Kapsalis, Apostolos. “Review of the ‘Ergosimo’ Service Voucher System in Greece”, Report submitted to the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission, May 2018.

312 International Labour Organization. Rep. Diagnostic Report on Undeclared Work in Greece. (Geneva: ILO, 2016). [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms\\_531548.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_531548.pdf)

313 Topali, P. (2014). The Domestic Workers’ Convention and its importance to the Member States of the European Union. The Greek Review of Social Research, 142, 41-69

314 It should be emphasized that this is not required of employers for the purpose of paying for services provided by Greek workers.

illegal in Spain, but once hired, such workers are formally entitled to the same labour rights afforded to other, regular workers in the labour market. For example, they are entitled to a minimum wage and protection from excessive working hours. However, for the majority of irregular migrant care workers, these rights are more theoretical than real. Almost all of Spain's irregular migrant care workers are employed in home care in an undeclared fashion, without being registered with social security. This is partly because their irregular status (most have no right of residency in Spain) severely restricts access to alternative employment opportunities. For the same reason, irregular migrant workers are generally unlikely to report infringements of their labour rights by employers for fear of losing their jobs. Some also fear that making complaints against their employers might lead to deportation. In practice, irregular migrant care workers in Spain are confined to care jobs with low-pay, difficult working conditions and where the infringement of labour rights are the norm.

Many irregular migrant workers apply to be regularised (i.e. legalise their residency and labour market access in the host country, so that they can reside and work) in order to access a wider range of employment opportunities, including higher skilled care work.<sup>315</sup> However, pathways to regularisation are restricted, and migrants that obtain work permits in advance of their migration may be bound to a recruiting employer for extended periods. In Ireland, for example, this period may last 12 months, which not only restricts migrants' occupational mobility, but also exposes them to the risk of becoming 'undocumented' in the event of redundancy.<sup>316</sup>

Migrants with irregular status are sometimes offered the possibility of regularisation via exceptional mass-regularisation programmes introduced by host country governments. Spain and Germany have introduced such initiatives in the past three decades, and the Irish government is currently planning to introduce a regularisation scheme that would provide legal access to residency and work for up to 20,000 migrants with irregular status working in the country.<sup>317,318</sup>

In Spain, migrant workers with irregular status can receive a renewable one-year legal residency permit (including the right to work) if they fulfil certain conditions, such as having a standing job offer and direct family ties with other foreign residents or Spanish nationals. If unable to fulfil these, they must present a report to Spain's Ministry of Home Affairs, produced by their local city council or autonomous community, which documents their efforts to integrate.<sup>319</sup> Migrant workers wishing to obtain temporary residency must also prove three years of continuous stay in Spain prior to their application. In practice, this means that most migrants must spend those three years working irregularly before they can hope to regularise their status.

Migrant workers who do become regularised remain at risk of slipping back into irregular status, as the renewal of their residence permit after one year is conditional on maintaining formal employment. The tight conditioning of residence permits on employment status can act as a constraint on working rights, as it deters migrant workers from looking for alternative employment.<sup>320</sup>

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315 Migrants who successfully apply for work permits prior to their arrival can be legally bound to a recruiting employer for extended periods. In Ireland, this can last 12 months.

316 See: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, "Changing Employer - DETE ." Changing employer - DETE. (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2020) <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Workplace-and-Skills/Employment-Permits/Changing-Employer/>.

317 "Minister McEntee Outlines Draft Scheme to Regularise Undocumented Migrants to Cabinet" (Government of Ireland, April 23, 2021. Government of Ireland), <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/4b765-minister-mcentee-outlines-draft-scheme-to-regularise-undocumented-migrants-to-cabinet/#>.

318 It should be stressed that many of the regularisation programmes put in place by Spain and Germany for migrants with irregular status over the years imposed challenging eligibility conditions relating to applicants' labour market participation records. See: Sebastian Chauvin, Blanca Garces-Mascarenas, and Albert Kraller, "Working for Legality: Employment and Migrant Regularization in Europe, (2013), <https://sebastienchauvin.org/working-for-legality-employment-and-migrant-regularization-in-europe/>.

319 Before issuing the report, the relevant authorities consider the applicant's progress in learning Spanish and his or her degree of social and cultural engagement with specific criteria including use of municipal public services, membership in associations, interaction with the neighbourhood and participation in cultural insertion programmes.

320 Irregularity caused by the inability to continuously meet bureaucratic requirements imposed by state authorities is an important cause of irregular status for many migrants in Europe. The phenomenon is termed "befallen illegality". See, Anna Triandafyllidou and David Vogel, *Irregular Migration in the European Union Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme*.

Applying and waiting for a residency permit can in itself be psychologically taxing for undocumented workers. Bureaucratic mistreatment, including institutional racism, in the form of administrative obstacles to processing residency and work permits, long waiting times, and the lack of information on the regularisation process are widespread and documented by migrants, migrant associations and NGOs.

It is important to emphasise that even regular migrant care workers may have their social rights and labour protections restricted by the laws and regulations governing care work. The administrative practice of conditioning residency rights on migrant workers' employment affects not only those with irregular statuses, but also legally recruited TCNs working in formal care. In Germany's formal care sector, for example, migrant care workers from outside the EU are bound either to a working contract with a specific employer or to vocational training (*Ausbildung*) in the sector. Change of employers under these conditions is very risky for TCNs. It puts their residence permit at risk and may also incur a financial cost, including reimbursing their employer for recruitment costs. In sum, TCNs experience conditions of recruitment that significantly constrain their access to broader labour market opportunities.<sup>321</sup>

EU migrants working in care can also be excluded from basic social rights and labour protections – despite their equal access to employment and labour protections 'on paper.' Spain's special social security and labour regulations for domestic workers (i.e. employees hired by households), of which home care workers are a significant part, are one example. Domestic workers are the only employee group—both migrants and local workers—who are not entitled to unemployment benefits<sup>322</sup> and who can be dismissed without cause, including during pregnancy.<sup>323</sup> The absence of safeguards is especially problematic for migrant home care workers—and even more so for live-in carers—as it increases their vulnerability to exploitation by employers.

Migrant care workers are also deprived of basic social protections through legal loopholes and inconsistencies in national and EU laws, rather than through formal legal exclusions. For example, in Germany's informal care sector, transnational intermediary agencies use complex employment models that replace direct employment relations between families and home care workers. They exploit gaps and inconsistencies in law— and between German law and EU regulations such as the Posting of Workers Directive<sup>324</sup>— to circumvent labour standards when recruiting and placing care workers in German households. Transnational recruitment and placement agencies are increasingly important to Germany's emerging home care model, especially since the EU's eastward enlargement— with approximately 330 such agencies by the end of 2017.<sup>325</sup>

Agencies commonly use posting contracts and migrant self-employment to secure work for migrants. In the former, the care worker is formally employed by a sending company based in his/her home country, not the German household in which s/he works. A placement agency on the German side cooperates with that sending company and establishes contact between it, the posted migrant workers and German families. However, there is no contractual relationship between the care worker and the placement agency, as can be seen in figure 5:5.

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Ashgate: Farnham, 2010.

321 CORRECTIV Publication, "Nurses for Sale" (CORRECTIV, 2020), <https://correctiv.org/en/latest-stories/2020/11/25/nurses-for-sale/>.

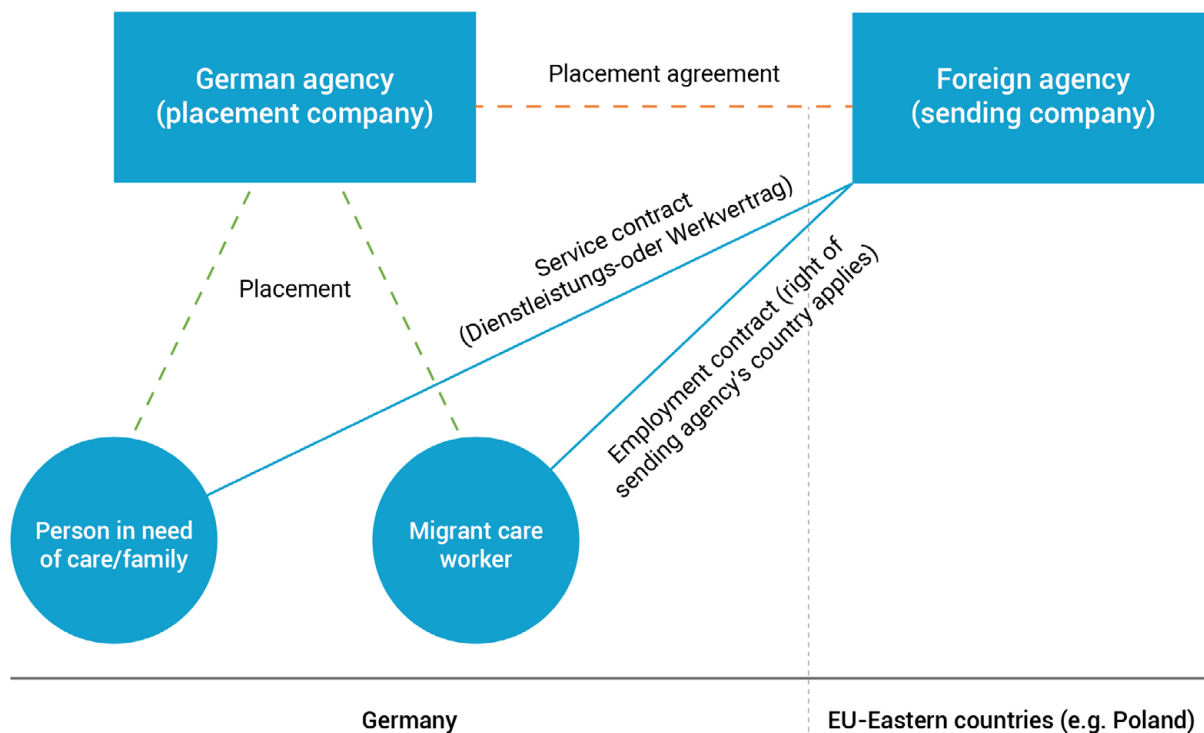
322 It should be noted, however, that in May 2020, the Spanish government launched a new non-contributory social security benefit called universal basic income that guarantees a minimum income to those who lack it. The economic and social crisis resulting from Covid-19 accelerated this measure's implementation, which will cover a significant number of care workers, particularly those in vulnerable situations. To be eligible, however, migrants must be able to prove at least one year of legal residence in Spain. The effects of this measure on migrant home care workers and domestic workers more generally remain to be seen.

323 Liliana Marcos Barba (2021): "Esenciales y sin derechos", Oxfam Intermón.

324 EurLex, "Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 Concerning the Posting of Workers in the Framework of the Provision of Services" (EurLex, 1996), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A31996L0071>.

325 Michael Leibfingler, Veronika Prieler, Karin Schwiter, Jennifer Steiner, Aranka Benazha, and Helma Lutz, "Impact of COVID-19 Policy Responses on Live-In Care Workers in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland" (Journal of Long-Term Care, 2020), <https://journal.ilpnetwork.org/articles/10.31389/jltc.51/>.

Figure 5:5: Posting contract model of employment for live-in migrant care workers in Germany<sup>326</sup>



Source: Author's illustration. Verena Rossow, and Simone Leiber, "Zwischen Vermarktlichung Und Europäisierung: Die Wachsende Bedeutung Transnational Agierender Vermittlungsagenturen in Der Häuslichen Pflege in Deutschland" *Sozialer Fortschritt* 66, no. 3-4 (2017): 285–302. <https://doi.org/10.3790/sfo.66.3-4.285>.

This employment relationship is formalised in EU Directives 96/71/EC ('Posting of Workers Directive') and 2018/957,<sup>327</sup> which, in theory, guarantee a minimum protection to posted workers. Transnational care agencies, however, take advantage of the EU Regulation on the Coordination of Social Security Systems (VO 883/2004) to minimise social security payments for posted workers. This regulation states that if a posting has a length of less than 24 months, the social security law of the country of origin applies.<sup>328</sup> Therefore, while the regulation requires compliance with German minimum wage legislation, it also guarantees agencies sufficient profit by allowing them to reduce social security costs. This is detrimental to workers who are then offered contracts with minimal social security benefits.

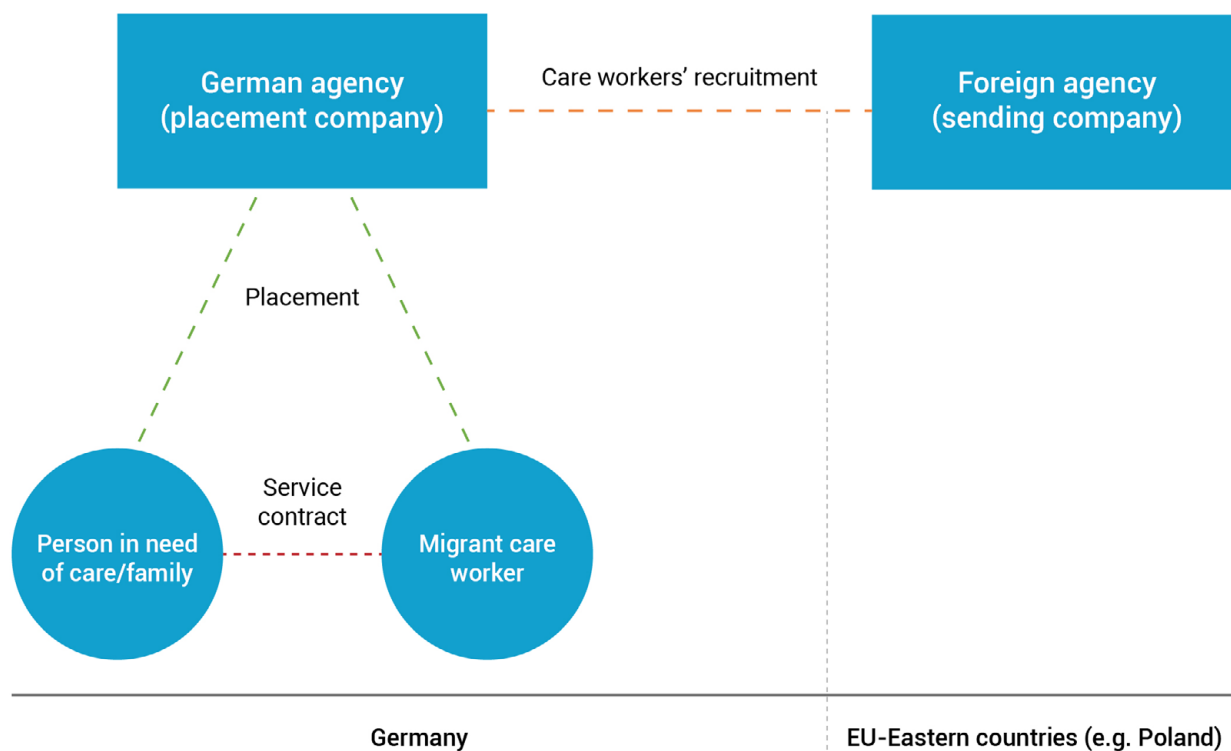
In the migrant self-employment model (Figure 5:6), a German agency establishes contact between an ostensibly self-employed live-in carer (located through an agency based in the migrant's home country) and the household in need of care. The self-employed status allows agencies and households to circumvent German regulations on minimum wages, maximum working hours, and social security payments. In most cases, however, this is bogus self-employment ('*Scheinselbständigkeit*'), as their working conditions are those of an employee (for example, they receive regular instructions from members of the household, and are firmly integrated into the daily routine of the household).

<sup>326</sup> Verena Rossow and Simone Leiber, "Zwischen Vermarktlichung Und Europäisierung: Die Wachsende Bedeutung Transnational Agierender Vermittlungsagenturen in Der Häuslichen Pflege in Deutschland." *Sozialer Fortschritt* 66, no. 3/4 (2017): 285–302, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45018246>.

<sup>327</sup> Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services. See: EurLex, "Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 Concerning the Posting of Workers in the Framework of the Provision of Services" (EurLex, 1996), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A31996L0071>.

<sup>328</sup> EU Monitor, "Regulation 2004/883 - Coordination of Social Security Systems" (EU Monitor, 2004), [www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vitgbjgqpbz](http://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vitgbjgqpbz).

**Figure 5:6: Self-employment model of employment for live-in migrant care workers in Germany<sup>329</sup>**



Source: Author's illustration. Rossow and Leiber, 2017: 293

The complex transnational employment arrangements governing Germany's informal care system feed into a climate of disinformation and uncertainty experienced by live-in care workers in regards to their social rights and terms of employment. Employers take advantage of this to curb migrant care workers' entitlement to social security and deny them basic labour standards such as a minimum wage or maximum working hours. On top of that, the posting work contracts used by intermediate companies render migrants vulnerable to health risks, since intermediate companies and employers can avoid providing posted care workers with a German health insurance. Live-in care workers thus come to Germany having only the health insurance of their own country (if they come from an EU country), or travel insurance (if they come from a third country). As a result, they face very high treatment costs in the event of an injury or illness at work. This turns out to be a recurring problem among Germany's live-in care workers.<sup>330</sup> The exploitative and semi-legal arrangements governing their employment in Germany function to make live-in care services cheaper for households and more profitable for intermediary placement companies.

Combating the exclusionary practices of care employers, transnational intermediary companies and state authorities requires care workers to be aware of their social and labour rights, and, where necessary, actively engage policymakers and the wider public. Language barriers and social isolation, however, can make this difficult. Often, it is up to migrant worker associations and civil society organisations to inform migrant care workers of their social rights and protections and engage the broader public on their behalf. Box 5:1 highlights a successful example of such an organisation in Spain.

329 Verena Rossow and Simone Leiber, "Zwischen Vermarktlichung Und Europäisierung: Die Wachsende Bedeutung Transnational Agierender Vermittlungsagenturen in Der Häuslichen Pflege in Deutschland" *Sozialer Fortschritt* 66, no. 3-4 (2017): 285–302, <https://doi.org/10.3790/sfo.66.3-4.285>.

330 Interviews DE.1 and DE.2.

### Box 5:1 Jeanneth Beltrán Observatory of Domestic and Care Workers' Rights (Spain)

The Jeanneth Beltrán Observatory of Domestic and Care Workers' Rights [*Observatorio 'Jeanneth Beltrán' sobre Derechos en Empleo de Hogar y de Cuidados*]<sup>331</sup> was founded in 2018 to make the labour demands of the care sector more visible. Its objective is to inform workers about their rights, collect testimonies about their conditions and raise public awareness.<sup>332</sup> In 2019, the Observatory organised a conference with representatives from parliamentary groups, unions, and associations of domestic workers. In 2020, it launched the School of Activism and Political Training for Domestic and Care Workers. Sessions were held on weekends but had to be suspended due to the pandemic.

The struggle to become aware of and defend basic rights hinders the process of individual integration and migrant workers' capacity to participate in the labour force on equal terms as other workers. Migrants, those with regular and irregular status, and including those from EU countries, are excluded in different ways from basic mechanisms of labour protections and social rights in the four countries examined. Migration, regularisation laws and transnational working arrangements play a role in constraining their social and working rights as do low levels of awareness of legal rights among migrant workers.

## 5.4 Living conditions

How and where migrants live affect their working conditions, ability to access and claim social rights, and their opportunities for social engagement. NGOs and migrants interviewed for this report confirmed that for many migrant care workers, poor living conditions promoted social exclusion and exploitation in the workplace.

Since 2016, there has been an increase in private renters and a corresponding fall in home ownership amongst non-Irish nationals, attributed to: "increased difficulty to enter the homeownership market (property prices, tighter financial regulations for home mortgage etc.)"<sup>333,334</sup> Migrant workers may live in shared accommodation and insecure tenancies, in properties in which landlords are reluctant to carry out repairs. Undocumented workers fare the worst, with no legal recourse to challenge landlords. Whether migrants integrate into the local community partly depends on quality of housing and the perception of belonging. As this report documents, both are negatively affected by the lack of information, language barriers, poor access to services, and long and variable working hours which characterise migrant workers' lives.<sup>335,336,337</sup>

Care workers interviewed in Madrid, who are also leaders of domestic workers' associations ('*Territorio doméstico*' and '*Senda de cuidados*') described having to share rooms and their overcrowded living conditions. This is common among migrant care workers in Spain, as many find it difficult to afford the high rents in cities such as Madrid or Barcelona. Irregular female workers often find their access to adequate housing blocked by landlords reluctant to let their properties to individuals with no formal employment contract or proof of monthly income. Consequently, they resort to renting rooms in overcrowded apartments, at prohibitive prices

331 Observatorio Jeanneth Beltrán Derechos en Empleo de Hogar y de Cuidados, "Quiénes Somos". Quiénes somos: Observatorio derechos en empleo de hogar y de cuidados, 2021, <https://www.derechosempleodehogar.org/quienes-somos>.

332 *ibid*

333 The percentage of non-EU renters increased from 62 per cent to 79 per cent in 2017/18 and among EU-East groups, from 72 per cent to 83 per cent. See: Frances McGinnity et al., "Monitoring Report on Integration 2020" (ESRI, December 2020), [https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403\\_0.pdf](https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf).

334 *ibid* p. 64-5

335 Focus Ireland, and Immigrant Council of Ireland, "Making a Home in Ireland Housing Experiences of Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian & Nigerian Migrants in Blanchardstown" (2014), [https://emn.ie/files/p\\_201211231100312009\\_Making\\_a\\_home\\_in\\_Ireland\\_ICI.pdf](https://emn.ie/files/p_201211231100312009_Making_a_home_in_Ireland_ICI.pdf).

336 *ibid*

337 *ibid* p. 9

and without a lease.<sup>338</sup>

Live-in care workers' face different challenges such as a blurring of work-life boundaries and exploitation through overwork. Renting independent accommodation is not always viable for migrant workers, partly due to expense and also because it is unlikely to be available for weekends only. Interviews conducted in Spain suggest that live-in migrant care workers instead opt for subletting rooms in shared apartments or sofa surfing with friends when off-duty.

Private homes may be isolating and challenging workplaces. Uncontrolled by labour inspections, there is potential for abuse. Live-in care workers tend to have no colleagues, and little contact with the local population. Social isolation is particularly pronounced in Germany's circular migration model. Carers (mostly women from Poland) moving between their own home and various households in Germany on a six to ten weekly basis, will not necessarily return to the same employers or geographical areas. Unlike live-in migrant care workers in other countries, who tend to be permanently employed by a single household for extended periods of time, they find it difficult to take regular time out for socialising or stay in one place long enough to create social networks.

While circular care migration is not the norm in Greece's care sector, several care workers interviewed reported that since the economic crisis of 2008/9, they too have adopted this model.<sup>339</sup> Migrant women from countries geographically close to Greece, such as Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia, use their informal care employment networks in the country in order to keep their employment opportunities open as they travel back and forth between Greece and their countries of origin. They return to Greece whenever their care services are needed by a household for a specified period of time. As one informant described this arrangement: "you call her and the next day she is in Greece, to take care of my father."<sup>340</sup> Adopting this strategy has allowed migrant care workers to minimise living costs following the economic hardships caused by the economic crisis and the ensuing austerity policies implemented in Greece. It is likely that migrants employed in this way are further removed from Greek society.

## 5.5 Working conditions

Many migrant care workers – particularly those employed in home care – are subjected to exploitative employment practices with the result that they work harder, longer and for lower pay than they are entitled to. Receiving some of the lowest wages in the labour markets, their work is both physically and psychologically demanding. Their limited social rights, restricted labour protection and unfavourable living conditions facilitate exploitation and abuse primarily because they enhance migrants' dependence on their employers.

Because a relatively high share of migrant care workers provide home-based care services, they are significantly more likely to be employed on an informal basis. Usually, this means that instead of formally hiring trained care workers via regulated providers, many households employ them on a private and undeclared basis.<sup>341</sup> This allows them to circumvent state regulations on employment standards and, in many cases, employ carers without a written contract.<sup>342</sup> Undeclared employment is an endemic feature of the broader household

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338 Interviews ES.23 and ES.24. The care workers interviewed reported paying a monthly rent of €300-500 for rooms in apartments shared by eight to ten people, in the context of receiving a net monthly salary of 900 euros.

339 Interviews ML.6, ML.7, ML.8 and ML.17.

340 Interview ML.3.

341 Many households combine declared and undeclared elements of work in their relationships with hired home carers. For example, 'envelope payments'

342 Indeed, the lower cost of undeclared workers is a key driver of undeclared employment in Europe. A Eurobarometer survey from 2008 found that 73% of all 'consumers' (i.e. end-users) of undeclared work in the EU cite cost considerations as either the main or a contributory reason for their making use of undeclared work. See, Colin C. Williams and Piet Renooy, "Measures to Tackle Undeclared Work in the European Union" (EuroFound, June 30, 2009), <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2009/working-conditions-labour-market/measures-to-tackle-undeclared-work-in-the-european-union>.



services sector, which includes domestic and home care employment. According to Eurofound, 19% of household service jobs in the EU were undeclared in 2007, a higher rate than any other employment sector examined.<sup>343</sup> Migrants in the four case study countries are particularly likely to work under such circumstances and experience unfavourable working conditions as a result.

Low pay and difficult working conditions are not restricted to migrant care workers. They also characterise the care sector more broadly, including more formal and institutional care occupations in Europe, including nursing, 'long-term' care (comprising elderly care and care for persons with disabilities), and early childcare jobs across Europe.<sup>344</sup> Long-term care in particular is seen as an unattractive sector across Europe, with low pay, unsociable working hours and overburden responsible for low employee retention and frequent staff shortages in many countries.<sup>345</sup> According to the ILO, factors responsible for the low pay and poor working conditions in the formal care sector include the high rate of female employment, public underinvestment in care services, care employees' frequent lack of qualifications, the low unionisation rates typical among care workers, and the general under appreciation of care work in European societies.<sup>346</sup>

Care workers face challenging working conditions in all four countries examined. In Ireland, as SIPTU's recent Big Start Campaign survey of childcare workers summarises:

"[l]ow pay, lack of maternity payments, lack of savings to meet unexpected expenses and difficulty in affording a decent standard of living have all led to a situation where over half of [care workers] surveyed are currently looking for another job. The majority do not envisage themselves remaining in the sector within five years if conditions do not improve."<sup>347</sup>

Similarly, Early Childhood Ireland reports that in 2018-2019, the average hourly wage of staff working in the early learning and care (ELC) and school-age childcare (SAC) sector was €12.55, or approximately 47 per cent below the average national wage. The majority of staff employed on fixed-term contracts during 2018-19 did not receive sick pay, maternity leave or private pension.<sup>348</sup> Pay and employment benefits are particularly low among those employed by Ireland's private sector providers, where unionisation rates are low compared to the public sector. Home care workers receive the lowest pay in the sector.<sup>349,350</sup>

In Spain, pay and working conditions are similarly unfavourable. The formal care sector is notable for its high turnover rates, recruitment difficulties due to the shortages of hours and low wages, short duration of contracts, and a large proportion of involuntary part-time work. The main advantage of institutional over

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343 *ibid*

344 International Labour Organization, "Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work" (Geneva, 2018), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_633135.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf).

345 Astrain, Borja Arrue. "Growing Demand, Precariousness and Austerity: The Long Way to Universal and Quality Long-Term Care in Europe." *Working paper Submitted at the Request of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)*, 2018. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/03/Borja-Arrue-Astrain\\_EGM-Paper-2017\\_Demand-precariousness-and-austerity-in-LTC-in-Europe.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/03/Borja-Arrue-Astrain_EGM-Paper-2017_Demand-precariousness-and-austerity-in-LTC-in-Europe.pdf).

346 International Labour Organization, "Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work" (Geneva, 2018), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_633135.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf).

347 Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), "SIPTU Big Start Early Childhood Education and Care Campaign Pre-budget submission, 2021" (SIPTU, 2021) [https://www.siptu.ie/media/publications/file\\_21952\\_en.pdf](https://www.siptu.ie/media/publications/file_21952_en.pdf)

348 Early Childhood Ireland, "Submission Towards a National Action Plan Against Racism for Ireland" (Early Childhood Ireland, July 2021), <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ECI-Submission-National-Action-Plan-Against-Racism-July-2021.pdf>.

349 Julien Mercille and Nicholas O'Neill suggest that the low rates of unionisation and pay found in Ireland's private care providers reflect its mixed care provision system, where private care providers are paid by the state to provide care services on its behalf (p. 615-16) Low unionisation rates and wages are used as tools to maintain efficiency in situations where the state reduces its care purchases, as happened during the 2008 financial crisis. See: Julien Mercille and Nicholas O'Neill, "The Growth of Private Home Care Providers in Europe: The Case of Ireland" 55. Vol. 55, (2021), <https://publicpolicy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Growth-of-private-home-care-providers-in-Europe.pdf>.

350 Sweeney, Rob, *Cherishing All Equally 2020: Inequality and the Care Economy* (Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Think-Tank for Action on Social Change, 2020) [https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/report-care%20economy\\_tasc-feps.pdf](https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/report-care%20economy_tasc-feps.pdf)

domestic care is that employees in the latter benefit from unemployment insurance protection from unfair dismissal.<sup>351</sup>

Germany's formal care sector employed approximately 1.9 million care workers in 2019, including employees of the elderly care and healthcare systems.<sup>352</sup> Insufficient recruitment has resulted in growing staff shortages in the sector, particularly in elderly care. Overburdened, frustrated workers leave the care sector due to strenuous working conditions and inadequate pay. The broader crisis of care, of which staff shortages are a part, is attributed to decades of resource cuts and privatisation in the sector.<sup>353</sup>

### 5.5.1 Working as a migrant care worker: dependence, precarity and invisibility

Migrant care workers tend to occupy the lowest paid positions in the care systems of the four countries examined in this report<sup>354</sup> and are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. First, because a disproportionate number are employed in private home care, where the high incidence of informal working conditions – including frequent lack of contracts and state regulation of conditions – translates into poor pay and exploitative work. This is made worse by their 'invisibility' within households. Second, and related to this, the social rights and protections regulating the work of some migrant care workers easily renders them dependent on employers and powerless vis-a-vis exploitative and abusive practices. The irregular legal statuses of many care workers exacerbate this problem.

For migrants working as home carers, informal employment can take different forms, not all of which are strictly illegal. In Spain, an estimated 36 per cent of those in the domestic sector are employed without contracts. Migrant home care workers with irregular residency statuses are usually employed in this way.<sup>355</sup> The same applies to Greece. Though precise estimates are unavailable, a large share of its domestic and home care workforce is made up of irregular migrants in vulnerable employment.<sup>356</sup> In Ireland, there are an estimated 24,000 home care workers, of which 6,000 to 7,800 are migrants with irregular status.<sup>357</sup> In addition, a growing number of international students are illegally employed in private home care companies and households.<sup>358</sup> In Germany, informality is concentrated in the live-in care sector, where complex, semi-legal

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351 International Labour Office, Spain approves new regulations for domestic employees" (ILO, 2012), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed\\_protect/-protrav/-travail/documents/publication/wcms\\_173686.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_protect/-protrav/-travail/documents/publication/wcms_173686.pdf)

352 Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Statistics of the Federal Employment Agency), "Reports: Focus on the Labour Market. Labour Market Situation in the Care Sector" (May 2021), [https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Statistiken/Themen-im-Fokus/Berufe/Generische-Publikationen/Altenpflege.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).

353 Ver.di, "Facing skilled labour shortage. Improving working conditions (Fachkräftemangel begegnen. Arbeitsbedingungen verbessern)" (Ver.di, accessed November 19) <https://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/themen/gesundheitspolitik/++co++80e0b0d0-4acb-11e7-b04f-525400f67940/@@index.html?kws=Pflege&page=3>; Michael Simon, "The DRG-Lump compensation system for hospitals. Critical appraisal and basic points for a reform of the hospital funding beyond the DGR system (Das DRG-Fallpauschalensystem für Krankenhäuser. Kritische Bestandsaufnahme und Eckpunkte für eine Reform der Krankenhausfinanzierung jenseits des DRG-Systems)". Forschungsförderung der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, 196, November 2020, [https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p\\_fofoe\\_WP\\_196\\_2020.pdf](https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_fofoe_WP_196_2020.pdf)

354 Historically, the prevalence of migrants in domestic occupations more broadly is linked to the denigration of domestic work over the last century. While domestic occupations used to be respectable forms of employment for European working-class and rural women in the 18th and 19th centuries, during the 20th century, they became the most denigrated and least desirable category of employment, and seen to be mostly suitable for migrant women with no alternatives. See, Anna Triandafyllidou, "Irregular Migration and Domestic Work in Europe: Who Cares?," Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?, 2016, p. 9-10

355 Liliana Marcos Barba, "Esenciales y sin derechos" (Oxfam Intermón, 2021), [www.oxfamintermon.org/es/publicacion/esenciales-sin-derechos-empleadas-hogar](http://www.oxfamintermon.org/es/publicacion/esenciales-sin-derechos-empleadas-hogar).

(Note that home care workers are considered a subcategory of domestic workers)

356 See for example, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Migrants in an Irregular Situation Employed in Domestic Work: Fundamental Rights Challenges for the European Union and Its Member States" (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/migrants-irregular-situation-employed-domestic-work-fundamental-rights-challenges>; Marouf, Michaela. "With All the Cares in the World: Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Greece." In Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?, edited by Anna Triandafyllidou, 95–114, 2016.

357 Rob Sweeney, "Cherishing All Equally 2020: Inequality and the Care Economy" (Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Think-Tank for Action on Social Change, 2020): pp. 83-4 [https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/report-care%20economy\\_tasc-feps.pdf](https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/report-care%20economy_tasc-feps.pdf)

358 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), "Preparing for the Elder Boom in Ireland" (MRCI, 2015), <https://www.mrci.ie/app/>

employment arrangements through transnational intermediary companies characterise the employment of the majority of live-in care workers. These effectively help position employer-employee relationships outside the regulatory oversight of state authorities.<sup>359</sup>

Informal employment arrangements are associated with higher migrant vulnerability to exploitation, breach of employment terms, wage theft and abuse. In both Spain and Greece, a large share of home care employment takes place without formal contracts and often involves migrants with irregular statuses. The absence of formal contracts makes it easier for employers to ignore minimum wage obligations (which, in Spanish and Greek law, should also apply to irregular migrant workers) and other statutory labour standards.<sup>360</sup> Irregular migrants (and other informally employed carers) are frequently forced to accept extended work days, unpaid vacations and are expected to be constantly on call.

Figure 5.7 provides an indication of working conditions for migrants in the Greek home-based and domestic cleaning sectors. They are significantly more likely to overwork compared to Greek peers. In 2011, 38.5% of migrants employed in the care sector worked 45 hours and over per week compared to only 9% of Greek employees.

Greece's migrant care workers were particularly adversely affected by the economic crisis of 2008/9, suffering significant deterioration in pay and working conditions.<sup>361,362</sup> Recruitment declined while daily wages were dramatically reduced by private employers, forcing formally employed migrant care workers to accept jobs in the informal sector.<sup>363</sup> They accepted pay cuts as they realised that their employers had lost significant income as a result of the crisis. As one care worker recalled:

“It was back in 2011, when everything was cut off. Wage cuts and benefits pensions cuts [to the aged employers] were trickled down to the wages of the workers in the care sector.”<sup>364</sup>

Before the crisis, she had been paid €1,000 monthly, “and with the benefits and bonus it would sometimes be even €1,500!” After it, she had been asked to work for €800, and was currently being paid €600 for the same work. As mentioned earlier, some care workers interviewed reported adapting to the crisis by moving back to their countries of origin, while occasionally returning to Greece whenever a care job becomes available.

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[uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/publications/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf).

359 Helma Lutz, Helma and Ewa Palenga-Moellenbeck, “Care Work Migration in Germany: Semi-Compliance and Complicity”. *Social Policy & Society*, 9 no. 3 (2010) 419–30.

360 See for example, Antigone Lyberaki, “Migrant Women, Care Work, and Women’s Employment in Greece,” *Feminist Economics* 17, no. 3 (July 12, 2011): pp. 103-131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2011.583201>.; Gabriella Lazaridis and Maria Koumandraki, “Albanian Migration to Greece: Patterns and Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion in the Labour Market,” *European Societies* 9, no. 1 (December 2006, 2007): pp. 91-111, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616690601079457>.

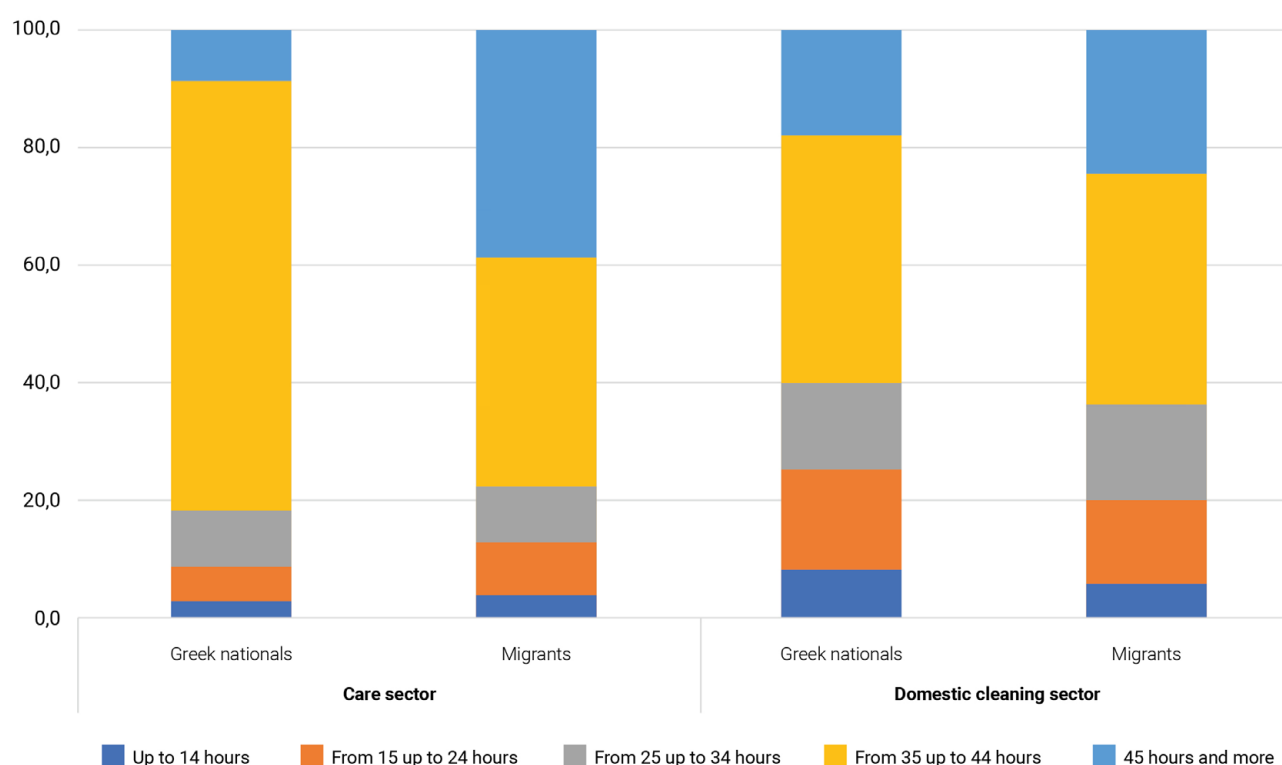
361 See, Thanos Maroukis, “Migrant Care Workers’ Trajectories in a Familistic Welfare Regime: Labour Market Incorporation and the Greek Economic Crisis Reality-Check,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 14 (August 31, 2017): pp. 2358-2374,

362 For a comprehensive overview of the impacts of austerity on Greece’s welfare state services and social care provisions, see: Maria Karamessini. “The Greek Social Model: Towards a Deregulated Labour Market and Residual Social Protection.” In *The European Social Model in Crisis: Is Europe Losing Its Soul?*, edited by Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead, 230–88. Geneva: ILO/Edward Elgar, 2015.

363 This included many migrant women who were forced to return to working as precarious home care workers after having worked as nurses. See, Thanos Maroukis. “Migrant Care Workers’ Trajectories in a Familistic Welfare Regime: Labour Market Incorporation and the Greek Economic Crisis Reality-Check.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 14 (2017).

364 Interview ML.7.

**Figure 5:7: Employment hours of Greek nationals and migrants in the care and domestic cleaning sectors, 2011**



Source: ELSTAT, Population Census (2011), unpublished data (own elaboration), based on four-digit employment categories.  
 Note: The 'Care sector' captures employees in household-related care occupations.

In Ireland, an estimated 27 per cent of undocumented migrant workers are employed in private home care, with a further 10 per cent in childcare and 17 per cent in cleaning and maintenance. Approximately half of all undocumented migrants in Ireland are therefore employed in home-based or auxiliary home care-related occupations. Their working conditions are highly unfavourable. While sector-specific earnings data are not available, approximately a quarter of recently surveyed undocumented migrants report earning less than the minimum wage and almost half worked more than 40 hours per week.<sup>365</sup> These adverse employment conditions reflect the near absence of enforceable standards, employment contracts, benefits, and health insurance in Ireland's home care sector.<sup>366</sup>

Migrants with irregular statuses in Ireland agree to work under such conditions due to the lack of better employment options for those with restrictive legal statuses and/or lack of qualifications. Faced with limited choices, irregular migrants may have to accept exploitative and abusive employment conditions. Asylum seekers living in direct provision centres, for example, have been found to take jobs as fruit pickers and informal childcare workers. The government payment to direct provision residents is so low (€38.80 per week) that they resort to taking employment with low pay and poor working conditions.<sup>367,368</sup>

365 More information and survey results are available at: Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "We Live Here, We Work Here. We Belong Here." A Survey of over 1,000 Undocumented People in Ireland." (MRCI, October 16, 2020), <https://www.mrci.ie/2020/10/14/we-live-here-we-work-here-we-belong-here-a-survey-of-over-1000-undocumented-people-in-ireland/>.

366 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), "Preparing for the Elder Boom in Ireland" (MRCI, 2015), <https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf>.

367 *ibid*

368 Asylum seekers in Ireland are normally not allowed to work for six months after submitting their asylum applications. Even when they do get a work permit, they still experience difficulties finding a job because employers frequently suspect that their permits are bogus. See, Aine Kenny, "Asylum Seekers' Difficulty Finding Work over 'Unconvincing Permits,'" *The Irish Times* (The Irish Times, March 22, 2021), <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/asylum-seekers-difficulty-finding-work-over-unconvincing->

The lack of alternative employment options generates risks for both clients and carers. In one illustrative example, an informal home carer from Malawi reported working 14-hour days at €90 per day, without overtime or extra wages for being on-call and without receiving adequate care training to address her client's medical needs. She felt that her agency only assigned her live-in work because no one else would agree to it, adding, "I was the easy target. I never raised a complaint about my conditions. I was afraid to lose my job. I know I was not being paid for the nights but I didn't have a choice."<sup>369</sup>

The unfavourable working conditions of informally employed migrant care workers reflect asymmetric relationships between employers and migrant employees in the home care sector, especially when the migrants involved have precarious legal positions and few employment alternatives.<sup>370</sup> Where migrant workers are excluded from basic mechanisms of social rights and labour protections, their bargaining power, capacity to resign, or take legal action against exploitative employers is reduced. In Spain, for example, domestic employees are excluded from accessing unemployment insurance. The threat of dismissal with no compensation explains why many remain in similar jobs for years despite working conditions and salaries below legal limits.<sup>371</sup>

Migrant care workers are also vulnerable due to immigration laws that tie their employment and legal status together. In Spain, in order to obtain legal residency, migrants with irregular legal statuses must live in the country for three years and have a formal job offer (typically, in the form of a contract) from an employer. They depend on their employer's promise that after three years of informal employment they will be offered the contract required for regularisation. The fear of losing this opportunity prevents migrant workers from reporting breaches of labour standards. However, in many - if not most - cases, employers do break this promise, preferring to dismiss their employees rather than enter into a contract that requires them to adhere to statutory minimum wage and social security obligations.<sup>372</sup>

Even if they do eventually obtain a residency permit, migrants often remain in a position of dependency as their temporary permits need to be renewed every year. To extend their legal residency in Spain, they are effectively required to remain in continuous employment and prove that they still have a formal job offer or contract at the time of each application for extension. Migrant home care workers with temporary work permits must also depend on their employer's goodwill and acquiesce to their demands. Otherwise, they risk dismissal and subsequently lose the ability to renew their residency permit.

Predicating legal status on employment is also problematic for migrants in Germany's formal care sector. The admission of migrant care workers from outside the EU to work in the formal care sector is bound to a working contract with a specific employer, who is also required to provide housing. The dependence of TCNs on their employers for work, housing and a residence permit severely limits their capacity to change or leave their jobs. As a consequence, they are also less likely to report abusive and discriminatory treatment at work (particularly if employed in rural areas) or illegal demands for overwork. A nurse interviewed for this report, working as a healthcare assistant on an apprenticeship/trainee visa, despite 18 years' experience as a trained nurse in Brazil, described her working conditions in an outpatient care centre as 'a new slavery.'<sup>373</sup>

Living arrangements are a major cause of vulnerability for live-in migrant workers. They are more isolated than

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[permits-1.4517233](#).

369 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), "Preparing for the Elder Boom in Ireland"(MRCI, 2015), <https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/01/Migrant-Workers-in-the-Home-Care-Sector-Preparing-for-the-Elder-Boom-in-Ireland.pdf>

370 Anna Triandafyllidou, "Irregular Migration and Domestic Work in Europe: Who Cares?";

Helma Lutz, "When Home Becomes a Workplace: Domestic Work as an Ordinary Job in Germany?," in *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme.*, ed. Helma Lutz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 43–60; Tania González Fernández, "Globally Interdependent Households: Irregular Migrants Employed in Domestic and Care Work in Spain," in *Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares?*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2016), 187–208

371 Interviews ES.22 and ES.24.

372 Interviews ES.22 and ES.24.

373 Interview DE.26.

other migrant workers, work in the constant presence of their employers, and depend on their employers for housing. This makes it difficult to push back against exploitative work demands and breaches of employment terms. If they lose or quit their jobs, they also lose their place of residence. This can be especially difficult for live-in carers in Spain, who in addition to losing their home also risk slipping into poverty, as they are ineligible for statutory unemployment insurance.

In Greece, the risk of homelessness and the 'pseudo-familial' emotional bonds that develop between live-in migrant care workers and their clients explain why many care workers accept continuous work weeks with no days off and no annual leave. As one live-in care worker described:

"I work seven days a week! And this is difficult! I used to have a day off, one day, when the old lady I cared for was healthier, and could remain alone for some hours. Now, I cannot leave her alone. So, we discussed it with her family, they told me to find another woman to take care of her on Sundays (...) they gave me €20 more, for [working on] Sunday. But who will come [to replace me]?" <sup>374</sup>

Interviews in Greece highlighted how, over time, care workers can develop a strong sense of obligation towards their clients and their families, making them feel emotionally compelled to perform care work for longer hours, even when this goes against their rights and well-being.<sup>375</sup> This situation develops into a vicious circle, whereby in order to retain their job (and home) and demonstrate their loyalty to employers, migrant care workers isolate themselves from the host society and bind themselves to their clients' households.

"So I say, I don't speak [about my rights] and stay at home (even on Sunday). And I stay inside. But even if I could go out [now], where would I go?" <sup>376</sup>

In Germany, labour rights counsellors reported that working hours and salaries are the most problematic aspects of employment in the live-in care sector.<sup>377</sup> Employers habitually ignore contractual working hours. The continuous presence of carers in their employers' homes creates the expectation that they are always available and on-call. The time spent on-call, however, is not considered 'work' and is not remunerated as such. Although live-in care workers are required by law to receive a German minimum wage, in reality almost none are, because the number of hours they actually work is higher than those stipulated in their contracts. Many receive no time off or leave in a six to ten week assignment. Such employment conditions completely dissolve the boundaries between work and life for live-in migrant care workers and often lead to physical and mental health problems.<sup>378</sup>

The social isolation and regulatory 'invisibility' of live-in migrant care workers reinforce their challenging working conditions. Their quasi-isolation from external sources of support can encourage employers to sidestep labour regulations. The absence of social contact deprives migrant workers of much needed psychological support and sources of information about their working rights. For example, labour rights experts interviewed in Germany pointed out that migrants employed as live-in carers tend to lack basic knowledge about their rights and are oblivious to the fact that German regulation on minimum wage applies to their employment relationships too.<sup>379</sup>

Live-in carers are invisible to public labour inspectors and other sources of regulation. The enforcement of labour standards in private households is a complicated undertaking, especially in Germany, where political

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374 Interview ML.7.

375 See, Nikos Xypolitas, "The Entrapment of Migrant Workers in Servile Labour: The Case of Live-in Domestic Workers from Ukraine in Greece," *Social Cohesion and Development* 11, no. 1 (January 2016): p. 31, <https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.10853>.

376 Interview ML.7.

377 Interviews DE.1 and DE.2.

378 Aranka Vanessa Benazha, "Verunsichtbart, prekär, systemrelevant. Transnational erbrachte Live-in-Betreuung in Deutschland" (Insecure, precarious, systemically relevant. Transnationally provided live-in care in Germany). *Impulse Für Gesundheitsförderung Online*, no. 108 (2020): 7–8.

379 Interviews DE.1 and DE.2.

authorities do not actively regulate the live-in care market, and where the constitution protects private homes from labour inspections.<sup>380</sup> Live-in migrant care workers who do decide to sue their employers face barriers that include administratively complicated juridical procedures, not designed for individual claimants and a lack of punitive measures against employers if and when they do win a case.

Labour inspections of households are also virtually absent in Greece and in Spain. Labour inspectors in Greece face serious legal and administrative obstacles to entering private households. An examination of the home by competent authorities to verify the working conditions of domestic workers is not permitted unless authorised by a public prosecutor's order.<sup>381</sup> Home inspections were also absent in Spain until 2021, when the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (*Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones*) launched a nation-wide initiative aimed at reducing breaches of labour standards in private homes (see Box 5:2 below).

### **Box 5:2 Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration Public Campaign (Spain): Plan de actuación de la inspección de Trabajo y seguridad social en el sector del hogar**<sup>382</sup>

In January 2021, Spain's Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration (*Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones*) launched a public awareness campaign through a mass mailout to employers of domestic workers across the country.<sup>383</sup> Employers were required to report their workers' salaries within two months of receiving the letter. Many employers had not modified their employee's social security contribution since the 2019 minimum wage increase, which had left the latter with less than the legal minimum payments. The letter reminded employers that failure to comply with the Ministry's requirements would subject them to a Labour and Social Security Inspectorate (*Inspección de Trabajo y Seguridad Social*) visit. This was the first time that action had been taken on non-compliance with labour standards in this sector.

Migrants interviewed for this report also commented on the need for employment intermediaries to also monitor employer compliance with labour standards in private households. A failure to do so was in effect enabling abusive working practices.<sup>384</sup>

## **5.5.2 Blocked occupational mobility**

Migrant care workers experience structural obstacles in their efforts to upgrade their skills and advance to better paying jobs with an improved work-life balance. Perseverance and/or prior care experience are no guarantees for improving their professional position in host societies. Failure to recognise their prior care work experiences and qualifications drives migrant workers to occupy the lowest-status and most precarious care jobs. Those with significant care training are barred from providing much needed care services, and instead are left with subsidiary care jobs, resulting in a major misallocation of scarce human resources.<sup>385</sup>

380 Germany's constitutional protection of the private home from labour inspections was confirmed by labour rights counsellors as an important facilitator of illegal employment practices in client homes.

381 Pinelopi Topali, "The Domestic Workers' Convention and Its Importance to the Member States of the European Union," *The Greek Review of Social Research* 142 (2014): pp. 41-69.

382 The Labor and Social Security Inspection is a public service that is responsible for monitoring compliance with the regulations of social order and demanding the relevant responsibilities. More information can be found at: Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social (MITES), "Organismo Estatal Inspección De Trabajo y ... - Mites.gob.es" (MITES, 2021), [https://www.mites.gob.es/its/web/Documentos/CAMPANA\\_Servicio\\_HOGAR/documentos/Nota\\_Plan\\_Hogar.pdf](https://www.mites.gob.es/its/web/Documentos/CAMPANA_Servicio_HOGAR/documentos/Nota_Plan_Hogar.pdf).

383 Spain's migrant home care workers, including live-in care workers, are registered as domestic workers for the purpose of social security and labour regulations

384 Interviews ES.22 and ES.24.

385 More information available at: International Labour Organization, "How to Facilitate the Recognition of Skills of Migrant Workers: A Guide for Employment Services Providers," 2020, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_protect/--protrav/--migrant/](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_protect/--protrav/--migrant/)

In Ireland, although migrants tend to have higher educational attainment than Irish-born citizens, limited language skills and flaws in the system for recognising international qualifications result in them often taking jobs for which they are overqualified.<sup>386,387</sup> This partly explains the high concentration of TCNs in informal home care work.<sup>388</sup> Ireland's non-recognition of foreign qualifications contributes to the country's broader problem of low labour market mobility among non-EEA citizens. A 2020 MIPEX study of 52 countries found this to be the weakest area in Ireland's integration policy framework.<sup>389</sup>

In Germany, qualified (*Fachkraft*) care workers have different tasks, responsibilities and salaries to auxiliary ones (*Hilfskraft*). Anyone wishing to work as the former must have their previously acquired qualifications recognised, specific training (*ausbildung*) and proof of language skills. This is a complex process for which migrant workers need help from recruitment agencies or employers. It may also differ between federal states. Certification obtained in one region of Germany may not be accepted in another. The rigidity and slowness of the recognition process, together with the required language level, create significant disincentives for migrant employment in the formal care sector.<sup>390</sup> Professional downgrading, insufficient in-work training, and a lack of professional mobility are therefore common features of the migrant care workers' experience in Germany's institutional care sector.

One trained nurse interviewed for this research, with twenty years' experience in her home country, but with qualifications unrecognised by German authorities, was precariously employed as an auxiliary care worker (*Pflegehilfskraft in Altenpflege*). Another auxiliary care worker described long working hours, lack of training or support by colleagues, and the absence of institutional support with learning German. These conditions led to burn out some months after starting her job. Given these barriers, some employers facilitate the process by assisting with recognition of qualifications and supporting language learning (see Box 5:3 below).

### Box 5:3 Company Z (Germany)<sup>391</sup>

Company Z has been providing outpatient nursing care for patients with mental health issues and alcoholism for over 20 years. It employs approximately 100 workers. 20 per cent are migrants, most of whom support families left behind in their countries of origin.

The company assists its employees with the complex bureaucratic process of applying for employment permits; sponsors their language classes; provides accommodation and also supports workers with the process of family reunification.

Company Z demonstrates how employers can facilitate social cohesion and support migrant care workers in negotiating structural and bureaucratic barriers to integration.

[documents/publication/wcms\\_748721.pdf](#).

386 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), "Home and Further Information," accessed November 18, 2021, <https://www.qqi.ie/>.

387 Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland" (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948\\_COVID-19\\_AND\\_NON-IRISH\\_NATIONALS\\_IN\\_IRELAND](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948_COVID-19_AND_NON-IRISH_NATIONALS_IN_IRELAND).

388 It also explains migrants' high concentration in Ireland's meat processing and horticultural industry.

389 This comparative study of 52 countries found poor labour market mobility to be the weakest area in Ireland's integration policy framework. It attributes this failure to migrant workers' unequal access to citizenship, social rights and training, as well as to their inability to have their qualification recognised in the labour market. For more information see: Migration Integration Policy Index Ireland, "Ireland: MIPEX 2020" (MIPEX, 2020), <https://www.mipex.eu/ireland>.

390 This also explains why, contrary to the expectations of some people in Germany, recently settled refugees could not 'save the care system'. Experts report that only one per cent of refugees with a background in healthcare managed to get their experience recognised and find employment in Germany's health sector. The option of completing the entirety of care training in Germany is unappealing, as it takes several years: CORRECTIV Publication, "Nurses for Sale" (CORRECTIV, 2020), <https://correctiv.org/en/latest-stories/2020/11/25/nurses-for-sale/>.

391 This is not the company's real name. A pseudonym has been provided for anonymity.



Migrant home care workers in Spain experience similar challenges accessing training that would allow them to qualify to work in the public care system (SAAD). Online training courses, which can cost up to 2,500 euros, are often beyond their means<sup>392</sup> and do not take account of work schedules. Publicly subsidised courses do not provide sufficient accreditation to qualify and are also difficult to access. The only realistic option for many migrants who wish to qualify is to accumulate three years of work experience in the sector.<sup>393</sup>

In Greece, migrants often find that their professional qualifications are not recognised. This contributes to overqualification, with, for example, nurses working as carers. There are few professional mobility paths for migrants employed as home care workers.<sup>394</sup> A sense of familial obligation to their employers also deters care workers from looking for better employment opportunities. Some, however, reliant on strong recommendations from existing employers, do manage to move on to jobs with higher pay and better conditions.

In some cases, home care workers incrementally secure more stable low-status employment outside the informal sector. For example, a former care worker interviewed for this report explained that when she arrived in Greece in 1994, she started working as a domestic worker in different households. Later, she combined working domestic employment with work as a part-time care worker. After many years, she found a secure job, working as a full-time employee for a commercial cleaning company.<sup>395</sup> Her trajectory confirms observations in the secondary literature that social mobility is limited and not easily obtained for those employed in Greece's care sector.

## 5.6 Conclusion

Migrant workers face low pay, long hours and strenuous conditions of work in the care sector, which are enabled by their exclusion from labour protections and social rights. As a result, they are dependent and powerless vis-a-vis employers, who exploit them to work harder, longer and for lower pay. Irregular migrant workers, regular third country migrants and live-in carers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, given their dependence on employers for residency permits and housing. Low pay, scarcity of free time, and the difficulties in gaining qualifications result in few professional mobility and training opportunities. As an activist from a refugee advice centre in Dublin put it:

“...people often feel that they are stuck in precarious jobs because if they work there for so long it can be difficult to get experience outside of that. Once you are at a low wage employment you can get stuck in that poverty trap where you can't take a chance on an internship or other job.”<sup>396</sup>

Low pay and the absence of unemployment insurance forces migrants to move from one care job to the next to maintain a minimum income. Their exclusion from basic forms of social protection confines them to exploitative informal work while undermining opportunities to access higher quality employment, where they would benefit from improved pay and greater social protections.

The next chapter examines how these conditions influence migrants' social and civic engagement opportunities.

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392 ES.22.

393 Interview ES.23.

394 On the subject of migrant care workers' limited occupational mobility, see Nikos Xypolitas, “The Entrapment of Migrant Workers in Servile Labour: The Case of Live-in Domestic Workers from Ukraine in Greece,” *Social Cohesion and Development* 11, no. 1 (January 2016): p. 31, <https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.10853>; Daria Lazarescu and Daria Yiorgos Kouzas. “The Careers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Greece: Perceptions of Intra-Occupational Mobility and Status Differentiation in Times of Crisis.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 35 (2017): 67 - 88.

395 Interview ML.10.

396 Interview IE.3.

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## **6. ISOLATED AND INVISIBLE: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION**

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# ISOLATED AND INVISIBLE: MIGRANT CARE WORKERS, PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Participating in community life and developing local social networks - whether with members of the host society or with other migrants - is unachievable for the many migrant care workers who work long hours and live in isolated households or separate neighbourhoods. Social cohesion at the level of a city or community fundamentally rests on the fabric of relationships and interactions between people from different walks of life. Not just the quality of relationships, but also the very opportunity for interactions between migrants and locals, are crucial determinants of social capital and harmonious relationships in diverse communities. This chapter explores the barriers faced by migrant care workers and provides some examples of employer and civil society initiatives that have helped overcome them. It then considers the potential of more active forms of migrant participation to bolster social cohesion through solidarity-based action by migrant care workers, trade unions and NGOs.

## 6.1 Barriers to social engagement

Social engagement is arguably even more challenging for live-in migrant care workers. They live and work in a household, where their main source of social contact is their employer and his or her family. They rarely have colleagues and their contact with the local population is minimal. These working conditions are psychologically demanding and prevent migrant care workers from developing local social contacts - an enjoyable element of everyday life but also crucial for support with exploitative working conditions.

Other features of migrant care workers' employment exacerbate this social isolation. In Germany, for example, in the circular migrant model described earlier in the report, live-in migrant care workers rarely ever 'settle' in any one place, not least because many of them still have families (and further care responsibilities) in their home countries.

Clients often demand that carers remain 'on call' outside formal working hours. As a result, migrant care workers do not participate in community events, develop local social networks or even enrol in German language courses. Their working conditions and broader employment structures impede social engagement, leaving migrants separated from their host communities.

Many live-in workers turn to social media for company and emotional support. In Germany, the digital space has been home to multiple awareness-raising campaigns led by migrant networks. The potential of digital technologies to facilitate connections and solidarity among some of the most isolated migrant worker groups in Europe is illustrated in Box 6:1 below.<sup>397</sup>

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397 Another example of an online migrant worker activist group is Respect Berlin, which focuses on the rights of undocumented domestic workers from Latin America: Respect Berlin, "Who We Are" (Respect Berlin, Accessed October 28, 2021), <http://www.respectberlin.org/wordpress/?lang=en>.

### Box 6:1 The care workers' initiative (Germany):

The care workers' initiative (*Inicjatywa Opiekunek i Opiekunów / Initiative der Betreuer:innen*) is a Polish women's activist group formed in 2020.<sup>398</sup> It began as a Facebook group created by a former live-in care worker to change the live-in care work sector. The group currently counts more than 500 members. The initiative disseminates information about workers' rights and standards in the informal care sector. Its aims are to improve migrant carers' access to social security, increase appreciation for care work, campaign against the exploitation of migrant workers, and raise public awareness among families employing live-in workers. The group is building relationships with the broader public, other activist groups and policymakers.

Migrant associations are important sources of support for migrants in other countries as well. In contrast to live-in care workers in Germany, home care workers in Spain tend to be permanently employed in single households for long time periods and can therefore take limited time off to socialise and develop informal support groups. Membership of such associations can be invaluable to migrant workers to combat loneliness, feel safe and supported and, in some cases, also provide material support, when they lose their jobs (and in the case of live-in workers - their homes as well) and are not eligible for unemployment protection. These networks are organised among individuals or among members of migrant associations and activist collectives. Some associations have even created strike funds to financially support women who have lost their jobs, and their support ranges from urgently securing accommodation or job offers for migrants out of work, to obtaining baby clothes, blankets, furniture, or legal information. Box 6:2 explores one such successful initiative in the Basque Country.

### Box 6:2: Malen Etxea Association (Spain)

The Malen Etxea Association, a migrant women's organisation based in Zumaia, Guipúzcoa, Basque Country, initially set up a self-managed shelter. The organisation is based in a house originally owned by a church, but then abandoned. Malen Etxea was founded in response to the housing problem live-in female workers face when they are made redundant. To date, the shelter has accommodated more than 200 workers.

The organisation relies on food donations from Caritas<sup>399</sup> and neighbours as well as on a small grant from the Basque Government which is used to provide psychological treatment to workers in need.

Migrant worker associations are also active in Greece, where their services and activities provide support in the absence of any union dedicated to care workers and, more broadly, the lack of fully functioning union activity in the country.<sup>400</sup> Women employed in the care and domestic sector turn to co-national or panethnic worker associations to be informed about their rights, obtain legal and financial assistance, access employment opportunities and/or to obtain help and advice on difficulties in the workplace. Examples of associations with a significant representation of female care workers include the Kasapi Association for Filipino workers;<sup>401</sup> the

398 More information on the Care Workers' Initiative see: Inicjatywa Opiekunek (The Carers and Carers Initiative), "O inicjatywie opiekunowie i opiekunowie (About the Carers and Carers Initiative)" Inicjatywa Opiekunek (The Carers and Carers Initiative, 2020), <https://inicjatywa.info/>.

399 Caritas International, "Ending Poverty, Promoting Justice, and Restoring Dignity," Caritas, accessed November 18, 2021, <https://www.caritas.org/>.

400 Interview ML.4.

401 KASAPI-Hellas, "Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers in Greece," Daphne Toolkit (European Commission, December 23, 2014), [https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/results/daphne-toolkit/content/kasapi-hellas-%E2%80%93-unity-filipino-migrant-workers-greece\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/results/daphne-toolkit/content/kasapi-hellas-%E2%80%93-unity-filipino-migrant-workers-greece_en).

Ukrainian association, The Land of the Stork and the United African Women Organization.<sup>402,403</sup>

In addition to practical, work-related assistance, migrant associations also provide care workers with emotional support and organise cultural activities.<sup>404</sup> They help strengthen their solidarity with each other and facilitate their social and psychological adaptation to Greece. Their work is particularly helpful to those who have recently arrived in the country, with limited knowledge of the language or who haven't developed local social networks.<sup>405</sup> The importance of these activities and services and the absence of alternative forms of representation underscores the need to build on efforts to increase migrant workers' awareness of these associations and, more broadly, their rights in Greece. As one interviewee put it:

“[It is important to participate in [the association], for women to learn how to speak for themselves, how to voice their concerns... These [issues] have to be learnt because [many] don't know about them (...) We [the members of the association] don't sit with our hands crossed or expecting miracles. We make our own miracles. We, in the association, with the other women, we can make miracles.”<sup>406</sup>

Evidently, social engagement opportunities are important sources of solidarity and social support - even if they are based online, or only involve co-nationals. Reforms of working conditions - to work-life balance and control of free time - would significantly improve migrant workers' capacity to socially engage with their local communications. Dependence on employers is detrimental not only to their working conditions, but also to their social integration and broader participation in their host societies.

In Germany and Spain, creating pathways for home care workers<sup>407</sup> to transition into formal care would be one concrete step to improving their circumstances. While also challenging, formal care workers are employed in a less isolated environment alongside other care workers, especially with local ones. For live-in care workers employed in circular migration patterns, work in the formal care sector would provide permanence, with greater opportunities for social engagement and long-term relationship building with members of the local population.

Germany provides an example of the critical role played by employers in the formal sector in facilitating migrant care workers' social engagement in and out of the workplace by actively promoting intercultural contact at work and offering mixed training programmes. They can also support broader settlement and cultural adaptation processes, as shown in the example in Box 6:3.

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402 See, United African Women Organization Greece, “About: United African Women Organization,” October 11, 2019, <https://www.africanwomens.gr/>.

403 For a concise overview of migrant organizations in Greece, see: Greek Forum of Migrants, “Mapping of the Migrant Communities - Part A,” Ελληνικό Φόρουμ Μεταναστών (Projects and Actions- Equal Rights), accessed November 23, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/yckj3wcu>.

404 Interviews ML.4 and ML.21.

405 Interviews ML.7, ML.8 and ML.10. These interviewees also noted that Albanian migrants, which have lived in Greece for a relatively long time, tend to be better informed than more recently arrived migrant groups about their rights and employment prospects in the Greek labour market. Their social networks are usually more diverse, as they focus their efforts on building social relations with other migrants and local Greek workers to ‘build a good reputation’ in the local labour market as hard-working and trustworthy workers. This helps them expand their employment options.

406 Interview ML.21.

407 Liliana Marcos Barba, “Esenciales y Sin Derechos” (Oxfam Intermón, 2021), <https://www.oxfamintermon.org/es/publicacion/esenciales-sin-derechos-empleadas-hogar>.

### Box 6:3: Charité Hospital in Berlin (Germany)

Charité is the oldest and largest hospital in Berlin with one of the biggest university clinics in Europe. The hospital has experienced a shortage of qualified nursing staff, leading it to recruit approximately 500 workers (10 per cent of its total nursing staff) from abroad, predominantly from Albania, Mexico and the Philippines. In 2017, it established a dedicated integration manager position to provide support to its migrant employees. Interviewed for this report, the current manager described her tasks as “technical, language and social integration of international colleagues.”

Charité facilitates bureaucratic and administrative processes (e.g. registration with the local authorities), offers temporary accommodation during employees’ first few months in Germany, supports them through the complicated process of applying for recognition of their qualifications and sponsors their language classes. It provides support with family reunification and childcare and organises monthly cultural and social activities for new staff, facilitating socialisation and cultural integration.

To date, Charité has retained almost all of its migrant employees which illustrates that employers can be key supporting actors in migrant care workers’ long term social integration. In addition to ensuring good working conditions, unlimited working contracts, and supporting family reunification, the support it provides for language acquisition and further training ensures long-term professional mobility opportunities.

Migrant care workers’ capacity for social and civic engagement is shaped by the availability of opportunities, their intercultural skills and broader propensity to socially engage outside of migrant communities. Language barriers may inhibit lasting contact between migrants and locals, and even feed negative stereotypes. Limited language competency is therefore a key obstacle for moving beyond the immediacy of family and co-ethnic networks. It leads to further retreat into co-ethnic communities, perpetuating any language and cultural gaps. Language acquisition is therefore an important avenue for improving migrant care workers’ connections with their host communities:

“Language competency is the foundation for building connections with others in the workplace, the playground, or at the local community centre, and measures to develop language support must recognise what are appropriate and effective ways of enhancing migrant opportunities.”<sup>408</sup>

Language and ‘cultural distance’ are important drivers of migrant care workers’ self-segregation in Ireland. For example, Latin American Solidarity Centre staff, interviewed for this project, have found that workshops organised in Spanish and Portuguese for female migrant workers with no qualifications (most of whom were employed in care and domestic work) would often attract a large number of highly educated migrant workers. They were:

“Looking for a sense of community and that’s in the language. There are groups in Ireland, like on breastfeeding, but they [migrants] don’t feel comfortable even if they speak perfect English. It’s like a bias toward the culture.”

Low levels of language competence may prevent migrant workers from making informed healthcare and housing choices and undermines their ability to be aware of and access important social benefits to which they are entitled. Such workers may face limited employment opportunities, abuses and mistreatment by

408 Brian McGrath and Frank Murray, “Brazilian Migrants in Ireland, Emergent Themes from Research and Practice on the Significance of Social Networks and Social Capital.” (European Commission, 2008), p.15, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/brazilian-migrants-in-ireland-emergent-themes-from-research-and-practice-on-the-significance-of-social-networks-and-social-capital>.

employers. Language and cultural gaps compound the wider problem of race-based discrimination and abuse of migrants across the country. Together, these factors undermine wider social engagements between migrant workers and the Irish population.<sup>409</sup>

Language instruction is critical to integration support. Language classes can in and of themselves offer a platform for intercultural encounters and social network building for migrants. Some NGOs in Ireland, such as Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre<sup>410</sup> structure classes for women that are female-led to foster a safe and friendly space to learn and develop their potential. For an example of language classes that foster broader social engagement among migrants in Ireland, see Box 6:4.

Despite the importance of languages for integration and broader social participation, it is difficult for migrants to access structured language learning opportunities and courses. Cost, eligibility and scheduling are common barriers. To access the free (or significantly subsidised) state provided language courses (*Integrationskurs*), migrants need to prove eligibility by registering as a resident with a local authority. This is difficult for seasonal and circular migrants - not usually registered as residents in Germany. Similarly, the course is designed for permanent residents with no provision of intensive short-term courses for migrants only in the country for a few weeks at a time.

While the course is free of charge – and obligatory for some categories of TCNs, it is not free for the majority of migrant workers, but only those in receipt of unemployment benefits. Although less expensive than privately provided ones, it is still often unaffordable for the majority of low-paid migrants working in the sector. Course scheduling is another barrier, with classes rarely available in the evening.

#### **Box 6:4: NGO for language instruction (Ireland)**

For 17 years, Brian Hurley,<sup>411</sup> a Dublin-based community activist, has run a project teaching English to migrants, currently supporting approximately 100 migrant workers. According to Hurley, up to 50 per cent of migrants can be unemployed at any one time. During his doctoral studies, Brian discovered that many migrants struggled to navigate everyday transactions, such as communicating with landlords and healthcare workers and accessing education within Ireland and were often isolated from their ethnic communities who were unaware of their existence.

The NGO helps migrants pursue educational opportunities and develop social networks. Language skills not only allow migrant workers to socialise and form social networks, but also to access crucial information necessary for integration. With approximately 30 volunteers, Brian organises events for migrants with the volunteers “[acting] as the front-line social networks into Ireland for the migrants.”

Work-related obstacles and intercultural gaps make it hard for migrant care workers to meet, interact and form lasting connections. However, employers, civil society organisations and migrant-led initiatives can help migrant workers overcome obstacles to social engagement and lay the ground for their wider participation and inclusion in society. The potential of civil society to foster more active and inclusive forms of migrant worker participation in their host societies is discussed in the rest of the chapter.

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409 Analysing the occupational outcomes of black migrant workers in Ireland, a recent ESRI report concluded that black migrants experience higher unemployment rates and lower occupational attainment, regardless of qualifications and language skill, adding that, “[t]his implies upskilling and language courses may not be sufficient in terms of policy effort: government and employer-led policies to monitor, prevent and respond to discrimination in seeking employment and in the workplace are also important.” Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Helen Russell, and Ivan Privalko, “COVID-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland.” (ESRI, December 15, 2020, p. 88.)

410 Nasc is the Irish word for ‘link’ as the centre links migrants and refugees to their rights: Nasc, “Home: Nasc.” (Nasc Migrant and Refugee Rights, September 28, 2021), <https://nascireland.org/>.

411 Interviewee IE.11 (pseudonym).

## 6.2 Active participation: Civil society organisations (CSOs) and trade unions

Migrant care workers' limited opportunities to participate in the social and civic life of their host communities calls attention to the underdevelopment of broader platforms for active community engagement and civic participation. The best practices highlighted so far have shown that initiatives organised by employers, NGOs and migrant associations may create valuable opportunities for migrant workers to connect with each other and with members of their wider local communities. While they benefit from informal contact opportunities and limited material support, important in facilitating different aspects of their integration, their role is passive. Bolder steps can be envisioned when it comes to promoting deeper bonds between migrant workers and their host communities.

A social cohesion agenda for migrant integration can and should push beyond intercultural encounters and localised migrant aid initiatives - towards deeper, more active forms of social engagement. It includes migrant workers securing equal social rights and economic opportunities and assuming pro-active roles in the social, civic and political life of their wider communities. CSOs and trade unions can advance both goals, by providing critical platforms for solidarity-building and supportive collaborations between migrants and locals.

Migrants who participate and volunteer in cross-cultural NGOs are more likely to form inter-ethnic friendships and develop positive attitudes towards members of other groups.<sup>412</sup> The EU Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion (2021-27) supports organisations that bring together migrants – and especially young people – with members of their local communities.<sup>413</sup> At a local level, community initiatives led by NGOs and other institutions are recognised as facilitating connections between migrants and their community, and in so doing, fostering social cohesion.

Active engagement with CSOs helps migrant care workers raise awareness of their challenges and influence policymakers. While they may have little time and resources to organise collectively, CSOs can build leadership and political efficacy in migrant worker groups. The Immigration Council Ireland (ICI) provides a model for collaborative engagement and capacity building with migrant community leaders, policymakers and the public working together on capacity building. (See Box 6:5).

### Box 6:5: Immigration Council Ireland (Ireland)

The Immigration Council of Ireland's (ICI) integration team runs frequent anti-racism campaigns. It hosts racism-awareness and intercultural communication workshops, with the support of statutory agencies and community leaders. These workshops are used by companies to educate their employees on systemic racism and xenophobia.

ICI works with political parties to become more mindful of the multicultural population of Ireland and raise awareness about diverse constituencies. It enables migrants to become more civically and politically engaged. This support has helped migrant communities engage with local authorities to request support.

ICI is also working with direct provision centres that house asylum seekers and refugees to achieve political change. For example, it has worked with residents to lobby for improved transportation and infrastructure.

412 Senhu Wang and Liran Morav. "Participation in Civil Society Organizations and Ethnic Minorities' Interethnic Friendships in Britain." *British Journal of Sociology*, (2021), 808–28. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33751555/>

413 E.g. see: European Commission. "The Reinforced Youth Guarantee." Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. EU Commission, October 2020c. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>.



In Spain, CSO organisations also work with migrant care workers to amplify their voices and raise public and policymakers' awareness about their working and living conditions. The Jeanneth Beltran Observatory, discussed earlier in Box 5.1, is a good example of this. In addition, migrant care worker engagement with CSOs also takes place through partnership between pre-existing migrant associations and domestic social movements. Joint initiatives provide opportunities for fostering broader civic and political participation among migrant workers. In Spain, alliances between domestic worker associations and broader feminist groups have provided a platform for political and civic action for female migrants employed in home care, as described below in Box 6:6.

#### **Box 6:6: Collaboration between domestic workers associations and Spanish feminist CSOs (Spain)**

In Spain, job insecurity and non-existent protections against unemployment have favoured the creation of domestic (including care-related) workers associations whose numbers have grown significantly over the past decade. Most have been formed by migrant workers from Latin America, some of whom have previous activism experience in feminist, union, or human rights movements.

Building on this background of activism, domestic workers associations have formed strategic alliances with the Spanish feminist movements. These alliances have propelled public campaigns successfully raising awareness of migrant care workers' exclusion from the unemployment protection system in Spain.

While live-in migrant care workers tend to have minimal interaction with people outside their employers' households, those who participate in migrant workers associations develop extensive networks with local activists. These serve as vectors for wider civic participation, helping forge solidarity with other civil society groups.

Notwithstanding the potential advantages of engagement with CSOs, interviews with migrant care workers and CSO representatives highlight several interconnected challenges to migrants' participation in these initiatives, including migrants' heavy work demands and temporary stays in host countries. The latter, expectedly, is a particularly important obstacle for live-in care workers working to circular migration patterns. That said, lack of permanence is also a challenge for migrants in Ireland who stay in the country for three to four years, during which involvement in community and broader civic initiatives is not an immediate priority. While some care workers may volunteer to improve their CVs or upgrade their immigration status, challenging living and working conditions mean that their overall levels of engagement remain low.<sup>414</sup>

In sum, CSOs can provide migrant care workers with crucial resources and representation that raise awareness among the public and policymakers of the challenges and exclusion faced in host countries. Migrants who become involved in activism help build solidarity across different migrant and local activist groups. CSOs enhance social cohesion inasmuch as they help migrant workers overcome barriers to participation in their host societies, giving them the opportunity to actively engage with their host communities and the wider public.

Migrant workers' participation in trade unions represents another important, yet underdeveloped, avenue to their social engagement and active participation. This has been highlighted by multilateral organisations such as the Council of Europe and the ILO.<sup>415</sup> In Europe, migrant employees are less likely to be members of trade unions than the local population.<sup>416</sup> This is a missed opportunity, since unions often provide platforms

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414 Interview IE.16.

415 Patrick A. Taran et al., "Articles 307-309," in *Economic Migration, Social Cohesion and Development: Towards an Integrated Approach* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Pub., 2009).

416 That said, migrants' union participation rates are high in some EU countries, and generally vary by industry, region and country. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: "[...] trade union membership rates of immigrant workers were

for solidarity building and collective action in support of equal social rights and labour protections for migrant workers. For unions, fair employment is an important precondition of social and political participation, which positions them as important actors in any wider social cohesion policy agenda.

The research conducted for this report confirmed that union participation among migrant care workers is not common. Not surprisingly, those working in institutional care sectors are significantly more likely to benefit from trade union representation than home carers for private households. In Spain, for example, union membership rates for migrants working in nursing homes and home help companies are similar to those of their Spanish colleagues.<sup>417</sup> In Germany, migrant care workers employed in hospitals and old age nursing homes are part of the wider unions representing care institutions and/or hospitals. For the majority of migrants employed in Spain's and Germany's informal and largely home-based care sectors, union membership is rare.

Migrant care workers union participation in Ireland and Greece is also low. Migrants were pivotal in the Greek Union of Cleaners and Domestic Workers more than a decade ago; however, as with Greece's other main trade unions, this union is not currently fully functioning.<sup>418,419</sup> As a result, migrant workers now tend to actively pursue their labour rights through migrant associations rather than trade unions. In Ireland, Doras, an independent NGO focused on promoting human rights and migrant rights, found that approximately 90 per cent of migrant workers are not members of trade unions, with half having no knowledge of union presence or their ability to join them.<sup>420</sup>

While trade union membership far from guarantees lucrative working conditions for care workers, collective bargaining agreements between unions and employers often yield some improvements in working conditions. In Germany, unions have focused on improving working conditions for the employees of hospitals, elderly homes and other formal care institutions.<sup>421,422</sup> In Ireland, similarly, migrant workers who participate in trade unions tend to enjoy substantially improved working conditions and standards of living. An organiser at SIPTU stressed that migrant workers who join unions can receive a minimum of four weeks' holiday pay, wage protections, as well as assistance with medical care.<sup>423</sup>

The principal challenge for trade unions is to represent the many migrants who work outside the formal

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comparable with those of host-country nationals in Austria, Belgium, Estonia and the Netherlands, while larger gaps between migrants and host-country nationals were reported in Denmark, *Ireland, Spain* and the United Kingdom." (p. 46-7, emphasis added) (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. "Together in the EU – Promoting the Participation of Migrants and Their Descendants," 2017. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/together-eu-promoting-participation-migrants-and-their-descendants>)

See also: Gorodzeisky, Anastasia, and Andrew Richards. "Trade Unions and Migrant Workers in Western Europe." *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 239–54; Huddleston, Thomas, and Jasper Dag Tjaden. *How Immigrants Experience Integration in 15 European Cities*. Immigrant Citizens Survey. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation and the Migration Policy Group, 2012. (p. 48) [https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ICS\\_ENG\\_Full.pdf](https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ICS_ENG_Full.pdf)

417 Interview ES.28.

418 Interview ML.4.

419 Konstantina Kouneva, a Bulgarian migrant, was the Secretary of the Greek Trade Union of Cleaners and Housekeepers. On 23 December 2008 she fell victim to a murderous acid attack, sparking widespread protests and reopening national debate about the precarious employment and violation of acquired rights of employees. Ms Kouneva was elected to the European Parliament as a candidate of the left-wing SYRIZA party in the European Parliament election held on 25 May 2014. See, Tsimitakis, Matthaïos. "Greece's 500." *Aljazeera*, June 13, 2014. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/13/greeces-500>.

420 The findings of the Migrant Workers & Trade Union Membership survey can be found at: Doras Luimní, "Migrant Workers and Trade Union Membership" (2016), <http://doras.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Migrant-Workers-Trade-Union-Membership.pdf>.

421 A noteworthy recent development has been the negotiation of a collective labour agreement for the elderly care sector, which would have guaranteed a higher minimum wage to the 1.2 million workers in the sector. This would have not only contributed to make the jobs more attractive to potential (and desperately needed) employees, but also act as a long-awaited recognition towards those already employed in the care sector, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the joint action of several unions vis-a-vis care employer organisations, and the support of the federal Ministry of Work, the negotiations failed in early 2021 due to the missing support of Caritas, one of the biggest employers in the sector.

422 Some union efforts in Germany have also been aimed at phasing out the informal live-in care market and promoting secure alternatives to this kind of employment. This task has been complicated by current EU and national legislations - which facilitate the creation of wide grey areas of semi-legality in the sector - as well as by the acute need for home care services in Germany and the still notable divide in wages and cost of living between Germany and migrant workers' countries of origin.

423 Interview IE.19

institutional care sector, primarily home care workers in private households whose engagement with trade unions is very low across all four countries. They are hard to reach, and many of them are irregularly employed. Trade union activities traditionally operate in established workplaces with high concentrations of employees and low employee turnover rates. Their organisational culture will need to adapt to the working conditions and schedules of migrant home care workers.

Trade union support for live-in migrant care workers has had mixed results. In Germany, there has been no major attempt to unionise an estimated 300-600,000 workers in the sector. Some trade unions offer specific support services, such as DGB, campaigning for migrant rights and providing counselling services. It has also supported nationwide programmes such as *Faire Mobilität*, which offers support services on working rights to EU migrants across the country.<sup>424</sup> The trade union Ver.di also ran a working group on illegality, whose goal was to provide support and organise undocumented workers by encouraging their entry into the union and providing them with legal representation in court cases. This initiative assisted a small number of undocumented care workers in court,<sup>425,426</sup> but was eventually closed down by Ver.di.<sup>427</sup>

In Spain, union representatives highlighted the difficulty of accessing and supporting live-in care workers. Domestic worker associations provide their members with legal and labour information, contacts for possible job offers, and mutual support, services that in many ways parallel those offered by unions. As a result, some migrant workers, particularly from Latin America, do not engage with unions. Conversely, migrants from Eastern Europe are more likely to become union members as there are fewer associations that cater for them.

Spanish trade unions have also failed to modify their provision to reach out to migrant care workers. The Workers' Commissions (CCOO) union is an example of what is possible when unions do adapt their practices to the working schedules of care workers (see Box 6:7).

#### **Box 6:7: Workers' Commissions (CCOO) Recruitment of domestic workers (Spain)**

One of Spain's major unions, Workers' Commissions (*Comisiones Obreras*) (CCOO), has been organising domestic workers in several cities including Valencia, Barcelona and soon also Madrid. Unusually, it hosts events at the weekends which allows domestic workers a unique chance to find an opportunity to come together with other colleagues to form social networks and provide mutual support.

Irish trade unions confront similar challenges in organising informal migrant care workers. Without making migrant union membership more visible, migrant workers hold misconceptions about the benefits and risks of trade union activity. According to Akidawa, a migrant association based in Ireland, "mistrust of trade unions by migrant workers is a major challenge." In some countries, union membership is equated with political involvement and can be seen as anti-establishment. In addition, union dues can seem extravagant

424 Examples of activities aimed at supporting care workers in Germany can be found at: *Faire Mobilität* and DGB, "Key Facts." Key facts, *Faire Mobilität* (*Faire Mobilität*, 2021), <https://www.faire-mobilitaet.de/en/ueber-uns/++co++1553ebf6-697b-11e2-8499-00188b4dc422>.

425 For more information see: Emilija Mitrović, "Without Papers but Not without Rights: The Case of Ana S. MigrAr: Trade Union Drop-In Center for Undocumented Workers in Hamburg." (Cornell University, 2010), <https://archive.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/Mitrovic-The-Case-of-Ana-S.pdf>.

426 Additional details on the state of labour rights, social protection and trade union initiatives in Europe can be found at: Kristin Carls, K, ETUC / EFFAT, and ACTRAV-ITC-ILO, "Decent Work for Domestic Workers The State of Labour Rights, Social Protection and Trade Union Initiatives in Europe". (ACTRAV/ITC-ILO, 2012), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms\\_218133.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_218133.pdf).

427 For more information on Ver.di see, Vereinte Dienstleistungs- gewerkschaft, "Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft," Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft – ver.di, accessed November 23, 2021, <https://www.verdi.de/>.

for workers on low wages.<sup>428</sup>

Nevertheless, there have been several successful grassroots campaigns. SIPTU's campaign in the cleaning industry demonstrates (Box 6:8) the impact that proactive union efforts to understand and reach out to marginalised migrant workers have in helping them organise and improve their working conditions.

#### **Box 6:8: SIPTU Fair Deal For Cleaners Campaign (Ireland)**

The contract cleaning industry has one of the highest proportions of migrant workers and is characterised by low pay, long hours, abuse and worker exploitation. Since 2009, SIPTU has been working to improve the working conditions of migrant cleaning workers.

SIPTU sought to understand the demands of the labour force through connecting with workers and identifying leaders within the industry. SIPTU had met with over 500 individuals from 22 different countries across 46 different employment sites in Dublin to support activism and social mobilisation through providing infrastructure for a diverse union membership. As a result, SIPTU saw a tenfold increase in the number of workplace leaders in the industry (from 9 to 89) and improved minority ethnic and gender representation of contract cleaning workers.<sup>429</sup>

The Joint Labour Committee for contract cleaners, which SIPTU helped establish in 2016, is now one of the lead players in setting minimum wages for the industry workers.

Trade unions provide a space for collective organising and solidarity building. They can and should be key partners in formulating integration policy guided by the concern for social cohesion and equal rights. In practice, however, union participation remains the preserve of a minority of migrant care workers in the formal sector. Trade unions make few efforts to organise migrant home care workers employed in private households and they present a challenge for union-led organising, largely outside the purview of union action. This is a significant missed opportunity, for as some of the examples discussed here suggest, unions who are proactive and flexible can make progress in engaging these migrant workers in collective organising, affording them opportunities to improve their working conditions at the same time as building collaborative relationships with local colleagues. This helps strengthen solidarity and social cohesion in society.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

Migrant care workers face various challenges in accessing and engaging with their communities and participating in organised civic and trade union activities that could facilitate their integration, build solidarity with other worker groups and improve their working conditions. Much of the difficulty associated with these forms of engagement stems from the conditions of work and life confronting migrant care workers in their host countries. Informal home care workers experience a vicious cycle of disadvantage in which their isolated and exploitative working conditions hinder efforts to form local relationships and engage with the organisations that could help them collectively improve those conditions. Local actors can compound this problem - particularly trade unions, by tending not to cater to migrant care workers' particular needs. That said, the best practices described in this report suggest that CSOs, trade unions and employers can and should play a key role in facilitating contact opportunities between migrant care workers and broader society. They showcase the potential of CSOs and trade unions to build solidarity with migrant workers and engage them in more active forms of participation. Policymakers looking for ways to advance migrant integration and strengthen social cohesion should facilitate the inclusion of migrant care workers in CSOs and trade unions.

428 Siobhan Philips, "Towards a Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrant Workers in Trade Unions" (Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), 2010), [https://www.ictu.ie/sites/default/files/publications/2021/ictu\\_migrant\\_workers\\_a5.pdf](https://www.ictu.ie/sites/default/files/publications/2021/ictu_migrant_workers_a5.pdf)

429 *ibid*

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# **THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

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# **7. MIGRANT WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND CARE: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

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# 7. MIGRANT WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND CARE: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

## 7.1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted the health and livelihoods of migrant workers in both sectors discussed in this report. Their working and living conditions have been associated with higher levels of vulnerability to the virus. These included inadequate standards of health and safety in workplaces, working in close contact with others; overcrowded living conditions; the inability to avoid high exposure to people carrying the Covid-19 virus and not having the option of working from home. Lack of health insurance coverage has meant that many workers have not received adequate healthcare.

A large share lost their jobs. For informal home care workers, this may have been after the death of a client. Some were laid off by employers who could no longer afford to employ them due to the crisis' economic impact. Without the safety net of unemployment insurance and savings, many were thrown into poverty. Temporary workers suffered sudden loss of income as they were barred from entering host countries.

Migrant workers who remained in employment experienced a decline in their working and living conditions. This was caused partly by employer pressure on governments to relax labour standards and social protections. In other cases, employers introduced and exacerbated exploitative practices and illegally breached working standards as a means of managing economic and health-related disruption caused by the pandemic. For example, many live-in care workers were prohibited from leaving their clients' homes out of fear that they might return infected with Covid-19. All in all, the pandemic highlighted how readily state authorities and employers were willing to exploit and disadvantage migrant workers to improve their own economic and social conditions.

On a positive note, innovative campaigning about unacceptable working conditions during the pandemic by migrant workers in collaboration with CSOs has brought unprecedented public attention to the systemic abuses suffered by low-status migrants and increased awareness of their essential economic role in both agriculture and care.

## 7.2 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants' health

Across Europe, both sectors saw relatively high frequencies of Covid-19 outbreaks.<sup>430</sup> In August 2020, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention documented the highest number of Covid-19 clusters in long-term care facilities, which accounted for 591 clusters identified across eight reporting countries.<sup>431</sup> The third highest number of clusters was found in the food processing and packaging sector, which saw 153 outbreaks in 14 reporting countries, indicating the prevalence of the disease in sectors characterised by close contact with others, low pay, and relatively high proportions of migrant workers.

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430 A Covid-19 'cluster' refers to the finding of two or more confirmed Covid-19 cases in a shared setting within a period of 14 days. When infection within a cluster is confirmed as having taken place due to contact between some or all of the infected individuals, the cluster is defined as an 'outbreak'. See, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters/covid-19-epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters-in-particular-settings>

431 European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, "COVID-19 Clusters and Outbreaks in Occupational Settings in the EU/EEA and the UK." (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, August 11, 2020), <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-in-occupational-settings.pdf>. The report uses the terms 'cluster' and 'outbreak' interchangeably.

Care workers have been one of the most vulnerable groups in the workforce with a high frequency and level of contact with infected populations in hospitals and nursing homes. In Ireland, community hospitals, nursing homes, residential institutions and childcare facilities have had some of the highest frequencies of Covid-19 outbreaks, including 21 outbreaks of infection in Direct Provision Centres.<sup>432</sup> While no migrant-specific data for the care sector is yet available, an imbalance between the proportion of total nurses and midwives and the number of Covid-19 cases has already been identified (six per cent of Covid-19 cases by the end of 2020 versus two per cent in April 2016) as well as among care workers (four per cent of Covid-19 cases in 2020 versus two per cent in April 2016).<sup>433</sup> Furthermore, 79 per cent of childcare workers (early years professionals) do not have a sick pay scheme at work, forcing employees to leave work as a result of illness. High turnover driven by low pay and poor conditions in the sector further enhance their exposure to the virus.<sup>434</sup>

Migrant workers in Ireland are overrepresented in essential jobs. Together with their economic vulnerability, non-Irish nationals have been more susceptible and vulnerable to the pandemic. They are 16 per cent more likely to be key workers than local workers – one factor in their higher vulnerability to Covid-19 infection. The figure for non-EU migrant workers is 46 per cent. 14 per cent of all key workers are non-Irish nationals, whereas they make up just over 11 per cent of the population.

While official data on Covid-19 case numbers and deaths according to ethnicity are poor, as yet incomplete CSO data indicates that Black, Black Irish, Asian, Asian Irish and Traveller groups are more likely to contract Covid-19 than those who are White Irish. However, the death rates of these ethnic minority groups from Covid-19 are lower than those of the White Irish group, which may be related to the younger age profile of the ethnic minority groups (Enright et al., 2020).<sup>435</sup> Table 7:1 below presents a breakdown of Covid-19 cases within Ireland, up until December 2020, by ethnicity and nationality.<sup>436</sup>

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432 Health Protection Surveillance Centre, "Epidemiology of Covid-19 in Ireland - 14 Day Report - Hpsc.ie" (HPSC, October, 2021), [https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/covid-19-14-dayepidemiologyreports/2021/october2021/CIDR%20Interim%2014%20day%20report%2004102021\\_WEBSITE.pdf](https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/covid-19-14-dayepidemiologyreports/2021/october2021/CIDR%20Interim%2014%20day%20report%2004102021_WEBSITE.pdf).

433 Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland." (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948\\_COVID-19\\_AND\\_NON-IRISH\\_NATIONALS\\_IN\\_IRELAND](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948_COVID-19_AND_NON-IRISH_NATIONALS_IN_IRELAND).

434 Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), "SIPTU Big Start Early Childhood Education and Care Campaign PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION" (SIPTU, 2021), Retrieved from [https://www.siptu.ie/media/publications/file\\_21952\\_en.pdf](https://www.siptu.ie/media/publications/file_21952_en.pdf)

435 National Economic & Social Council, "Secretariat Covid-19 Working Paper Series The Impacts of Covid-19 on Ethnic Minority and Migrant Groups in Ireland" (NESC, 2021), [http://files.nesc.ie/nesc\\_research\\_series/research\\_series\\_paper\\_18\\_Covid19Migrants.pdf](http://files.nesc.ie/nesc_research_series/research_series_paper_18_Covid19Migrants.pdf).

436 Unfortunately, these figures do not distinguish between foreign and Irish ethnic minorities.



**Table 7:1 Profile of Covid-19 Cases by Ethnicity and Nationality in Ireland, 2020**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>	<b>% of Population (2016)</b>
White Irish	39,934	79.2	82.2
White Irish Traveller	885	1.8	0.7
Any Other White Background	3,196	6.5	9.5
Black or Black Irish	1,229	2.5	1.4
Asian or Asian Irish	2,360	4.8	2.1
Other incl. Mixed Background	639	1.3	1.5
Not Stated	1,926	3.9	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,169</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>	<b>% of Population (2016)</b>
Irish	43,022	87.5	87.0
Non-Irish	5,950	12.1	11.4
Not Stated ind. No Nationality	197	0.4	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,169</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CSO CIDR data matched to 2016 census data. (see original for notes).<sup>437</sup>

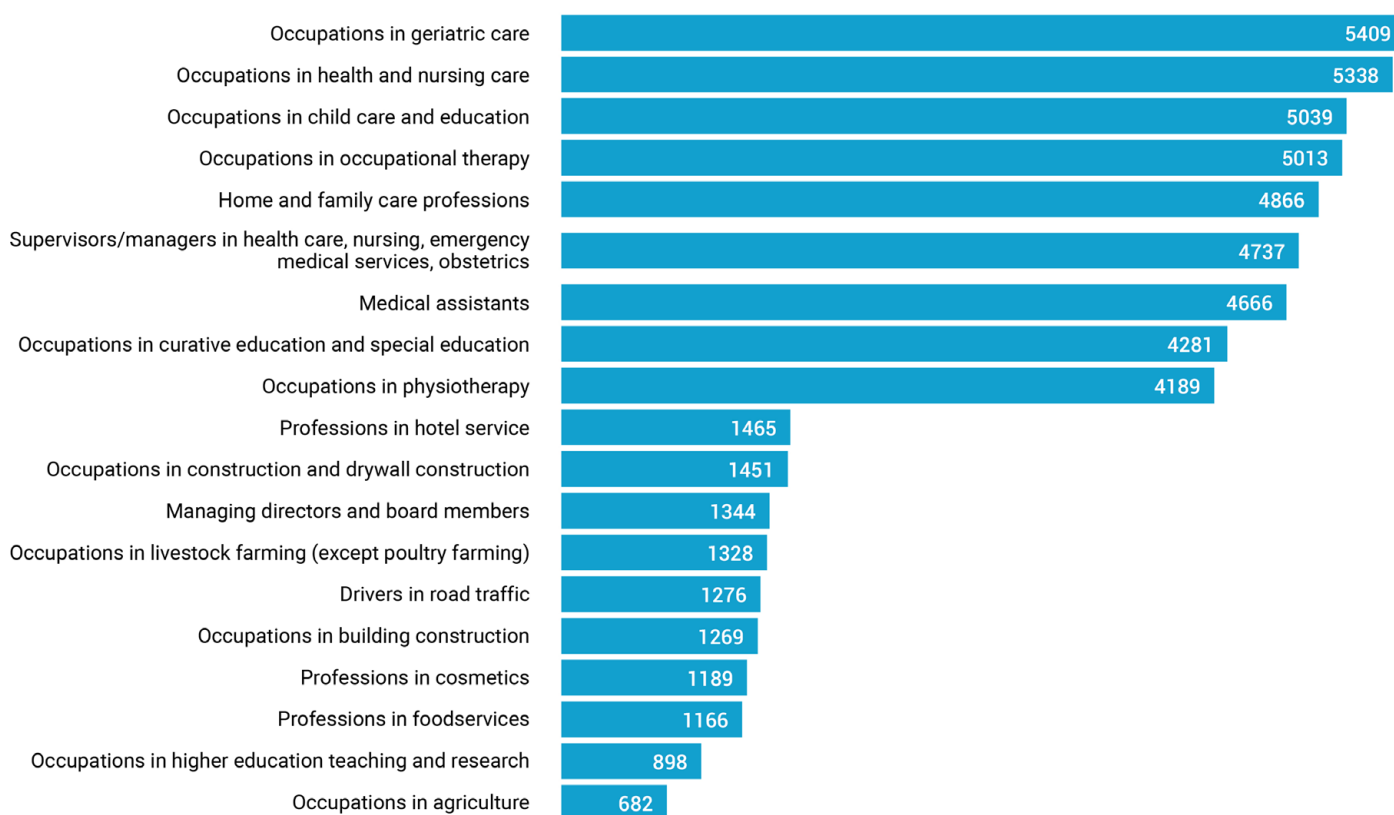
Data from the largest statutory health insurance fund in Germany, AOK, suggests that those employed in care jobs were most likely to contract Covid-19 (Figure 7:2). In contrast, employees in sectors where social distancing was implemented, for example, in the food-services industry, were significantly less likely to contract it. The relatively high average age of live-in care workers has also been an overlooked risk factor, with this form of care work widespread among retired women from Eastern Europe.

In Spain, employees in healthcare and female home care workers had the highest Covid-19 incidence figures, accounting for 16.8 and 16.3 per cent of workers with Covid-19 antibodies in December 2020, respectively. This was due to factors such as employers' failure to provide protective equipment and being required to care for children that had been placed in quarantine after having been exposed to someone who tested positive for the virus. Care workers who resisted work under these risky conditions were often threatened with dismissal.

<sup>437</sup> Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland." (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948\\_COVID-19\\_AND\\_NON-IRISH\\_NATIONALS\\_IN\\_IRELAND](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948_COVID-19_AND_NON-IRISH_NATIONALS_IN_IRELAND).

**Figure 7:2: Number of sick certificates due to Covid-19 per 100,000 workers, occupational groups with highest and lowest absences (Germany)**

(Employed AOK members, involves documented diagnoses with detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus as well as clinical Covid-19 suspicion without virus detection, March 2020 to February 2021)



Author's elaboration based on AOK data. Created with Datawrapper.

Across Europe, the agricultural sector suffered several high-profile breakouts, especially in food plants. In August 2020, 153 Covid-19 clusters were reported by 13 countries in Europe, accounting for a total of 3,820 cases of infection. Of those, 114 clusters were located in food processing plants (2,529 cases), and 26 were linked to agricultural food production (e.g. 1,016 cases in fruit-picking), indicating a prevalence of the disease in sectors characterised by close contact with others and low pay, as well as disproportionate numbers of migrant workers. The country with the highest reported number of Covid-19 cases in its agricultural sector was Ireland (1,154), followed by Spain (1,016).<sup>438</sup>

The spike in Covid-19 cases in Ireland in the first months of 2021 hit Irish meatpacking workers particularly hard. SIPTU, the trade union representing workers in meat processing plants, estimated that 25 per cent of all workers in meatpacking plants contracted Covid-19, and in some plants in the west of Ireland, 100 workers at a time were found to have positive cases.<sup>439</sup> Industry-wide, 47 Covid-19 clusters were found in meat plants.<sup>440</sup> Only 20 per cent of the meat production labour force has access to sick pay schemes.<sup>441</sup> The ECDC (2020)

438 European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, "COVID-19 Clusters and Outbreaks in Occupational Settings in the EU/EEA and the UK." (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, August 11, 2020), <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-in-occupational-settings.pdf>.

439 "SIPTU Says Government Must Address Recurring COVID-19 Outbreaks in Meat Processing Plants," 2021, Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), [https://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2021/fullstory\\_22241\\_en.html](https://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2021/fullstory_22241_en.html)

440 Interview IE.17.

441 Shannen Enright, Frances McGinnity, Ivan Privalko, and Helen Russell, "Covid-19 and Non-Irish Nationals in Ireland." (Institute Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2020), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347327948>.

reported the highest number of clusters amongst EU countries in Ireland, or 1154, and attributed the spread of the disease in this industry to “working in confined or close spaces and lack of social distancing; workers (mainly referring to migrant workers) sharing accommodation sometimes described as being overcrowded and with poor hygiene conditions; shared transport; [and] employing seasonal workers from areas with a higher incidence of COVID-19.”<sup>442</sup>

In Germany, at the end of May 2020, public attention was focused on the meat processing industry after large-scale outbreaks in industrial slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants. 1,500 meat workers caught the Covid-19 virus following an outbreak in a slaughterhouse in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. German regional public health authorities responded by quarantining 7,000 employees and implementing a local lockdown.<sup>443</sup> As in Ireland, hygiene measures and contact restrictions had been largely disregarded by Germany’s meat industry.

### 7.3 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants in the agricultural sector

The pandemic drew sudden public attention to agricultural workers, a group who had hitherto been relatively ignored. It highlighted the essential role that they have in food production, the agricultural sector and wider economy. At the same time, it exposed exploitative and unacceptable living and work conditions, the precarity of their employment including the large number of undocumented workers. As outlined above, it also made clear that these conditions made implementing public health campaigns to prevent the spread of Covid-19 extremely difficult.

In Spain, the spring of 2020 saw a series of outbreaks of the disease among seasonal workers in the agricultural regions of Huesca and Lleida. These led to the total lockdown of several towns and helped turn the media spotlight onto the realities of migrant workers’ working and living conditions.<sup>444</sup> The pandemic made evident that these conditions make it extremely difficult to implement public health strategies to prevent contagion. The high incidence of homelessness, overcrowding in transport and in collective and irregular accommodation, together with the frequent absence of running water in farms, and agricultural migrant workers’ high geographical mobility all pose enormous challenges to efforts to prevent the spread of the virus. These conditions make it very difficult to comply with protection and social distancing measures, or to carry out mandatory quarantines.

With increased public awareness of the need to improve migrant workers’ living and working conditions, in July 2020, the Spanish Ombudsman urged local government, employers, and organisations working in the sector to “seek a coordinated and urgent solution to end the degradation in which seasonal agricultural workers live in various areas of Spain.” It called for these workers to be guaranteed their labour rights and decent living conditions, declaring that the pandemic has revealed “in all its crudeness, problems that have been more or less ignored for a long time, causing the seams of the system to burst” and announced the launch of an investigation into the sector.<sup>445</sup>

During the state of emergency in April 2020, faced with a sharp decrease in the supply of agricultural seasonal labour due to health restrictions on travel from their countries of origin, the Spanish government was forced

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#### [COVID-19 AND NON-IRISH NATIONALS IN IRELAND.](#)

442 Ibid: 7

443 Kate Connolly, “Meat Plant Must Be Held to Account for Covid-19 Outbreak, Says German Minister.” *The Guardian* (June 22, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/22/meat-plant-must-be-held-to-account-covid-19-outbreak-germany>.

444 Oriol Güell and Virginia López Enano, “Spain Reports 73 Active Coronavirus Outbreaks, Six More in 24 Hours.” (EL PAÍS English Edition, July 10, 2020), <https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-07-10/spain-reports-73-active-coronavirus-outbreaks-six-more-in-24-hours.html> [Accessed 4 October 2021].

445 Defensor del Pueblo. “El Defensor Pide Que Se Garanticen Los Derechos Laborales y Unas Condiciones de Habitabilidad Dignas Para Los Temporeros Agrícolas,” July 21, 2020. <https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/noticias/situacion-trabajadoras-trabajadores-temporeros/>

to adopt extraordinary measures to make employment for migrant workers more flexible. Those whose work permits expired before June 30, 2020, were allowed to take jobs; as were 18 to 21 year olds who were in Spain legally, usually minors who had been under guardianship and who, according to the legislation in force at the time, had residency but not work permits.<sup>446</sup>

After the state of emergency was called, seasonal strawberry workers from Morocco were forced to stay in Spain due to closed borders. They worked in very difficult circumstances until the harvest was over, not least because workers who had planned to join them were not able to travel to Spain. They then were not able to return to Morocco, but were trapped in their barracks on the farms, isolated, without a contract, until after complicated negotiations between the Spanish and Moroccan authorities, they were finally repatriated by boat.

In Germany, the reduced workforce (approximately 40,000 less migrant seasonal workers than the expected 80,000 entered the country between the end of March and Mid-June 2020), meant that migrant workers also had excessively heavy workloads. This was politically addressed by modifying labour regulations on permitted working hours (which, in essential sectors, such as agriculture, were extended up to 12 hours/day and 60 hours/week) and on the exemption period before which employers must start paying social security contributions (from 70 to 115 days/year). These measures, which often came because of intense lobbying by farmers, accommodated their interests and disregarded workers' perspectives and needs. German unions have heavily criticised the agricultural lobby for using the crisis to obtain special rules and weaken workers' rights.<sup>447</sup>

At the end of May, the media and public attention in Germany turned to the meat processing industry in the aftermath of several Covid-19 mass outbreaks in industrial slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants across the country, where hygiene measures and contact restrictions had been largely disregarded for many years.

The meat processing industry's reliance on exploiting migrant workers through inadequate health and safety standards and crowded working and living conditions in its plants were also key causes of Covid-19 outbreaks in Ireland's meat processing plants. In an interview for this report, Greg Ennis, a SIPTU trade union representative, linked Covid-19 infections in these plants to employer malpractices such as forcing employees to continue working despite still recovering from Covid-19, as well as their overcrowded housing and transport. The industry also relies on discriminatory migrant sorting practices. For example, residents of direct provision centres employed in meat packing plants may be assigned to the least hygienic working conditions.

In Greece, safeguarding migrants has been put in second place to the protection of the agricultural sector. In autumn 2020, a new policy measure was introduced to address the impact of the pandemic on farmers' incomes. Olive farmers were subsidised with €126 million for loss of income from declining crop prices.<sup>448</sup> This funding had originally been allocated to environmental policy. Third country migrants, especially refugees, have been most severely affected by administrative delays and measures introduced to exclude migrants from accessing healthcare during the pandemic.<sup>449</sup> Migrant and seasonal agricultural workers were not included in the furlough scheme adopted in the first phase of the pandemic, in the spring of 2020. However,

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446 Mutua Universal, "Actual Decree-Law 13/2020 of 7 April, through Which Certain Measures Are Adopted Urgent with Regard to Agricultural Employment," Royal Decree-Law 13/2020 - Mutua Universal, April 7, 2020, <https://www.mutuauniversal.net/en/servicios/gestion-de-la-prevencion/riesgos-biologicos/coronavirus-2019/Real-Decreto-13-2020/>.

447 DGB (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund). 18.02.2021. Statement: Saisonarbeit in der Landwirtschaft. Mehr Schutz für Erntehelfer/innen. Online: <https://www.dgb.de/themen/++co++8043b236-71c7-11eb-9e8c-001a4a160123> (Accessed: 5 July 2021).

448 European Commission, "Supporting the Agriculture and Food Sectors Amid Coronavirus," Europa.eu (EU Commission, November 15, 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/coronavirus-response\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/coronavirus-response_en).

449 Pania Karnaki, "Hosting Migrants in a Crisis: Access to COVID-19 Health Care Services for Migrants and Refugees in Greece." EuroHealthNet Magazine, November 24, 2020. <https://eurohealthnet-magazine.eu/hosting-migrants-in-a-crisis-access-to-covid-19-health-care-services-for-migrants-and-refugees-in-greece/>. (Accessed 10 November 2021)

emergency legislation<sup>450</sup> provided for the automatic six month extension of work permits in effect at the time, including those of irregular migrant workers employed under the scheme of Art.13A of Law 4251/2014. Soon afterwards, emergency measures were taken to simplify Art.13A, seasonal work, and employer-invite processes, in an effort to salvage the harvesting season.

The full extent of the impact on migrant workers of the pandemic, and the movement and work restrictive measures adopted in response, has not been calculated. Undoubtedly, though, as the income of migrants is based on their seasonal/circular movement to specific places, strict mobility restrictions placed pressure on the operation of the farms and on migrants themselves. Further, even as the pandemic progressed and restrictions somewhat relaxed, employer associations, such as local chambers of commerce, reported problematic issues with the employer-driven invitation procedure used to recruit seasonal workers.<sup>451</sup>

The most significant impact of the pandemic, however, relates to the health and safety of migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, including access to vaccination. Even though migrant workers were informed by authorities of the protective measures to be taken, inadequate living conditions in crowded settlements made their application practically impossible. There was no monitoring of the situation by public health or labour authorities. As such, there are no clear records on the number of Covid-19 cases that resulted. Furthermore, migrant workers, especially those deemed 'irregular', had no access to self-tests and vaccines for more than a year as they had to be linked to a valid social security number (AMKA) (the access to which had been made more difficult for non-citizens in October 2019).<sup>452</sup> It was only in March 2021 that legislation provided for the issuing of 'temporary social security numbers' (ΠΑΜΚΑ) as an emergency measure solely for Covid-19 vaccination purposes, albeit through a bureaucratic process that, in practice, excluded a significant number of migrant workers. In the latest report (June 2021) of its 'Manolada Watch' initiative, non-profit organisation 'Generation 2.0 For Rights Equality and Diversity' notes that only a small minority of the migrant worker population had managed to gain access to vaccination. The great majority, comprised of undocumented 'irregular' migrant workers, remained without a means to access vaccination or basic public medical services.

## 7.4 The impact of Covid-19 on migrants in the care sector

During the pandemic, informal home care workers experienced redundancies and a decline in working conditions. Those who kept their jobs faced intensified work demands and were increasingly isolated in their clients' households.

In Germany, even though there was public praise for care workers during the early weeks of the pandemic, their interests were subordinated to those of their clients. The latter were aware that border closures risked leaving them without access to critically needed home care services. At the same time, care workers who were waiting to replace their colleagues in Germany found themselves without employment, causing many of them considerable financial hardship.<sup>453</sup> Even when work was available, early border closures meant that migrant workers could not re-enter the country. Demands for transnational care workers eventually led the government to open (without public announcement) its border with Poland, the home country of the majority of live-in care workers employed in Germany.

The pandemic became a test of loyalty for live-in workers who were asked to pitch their obligations to their own families against those of their clients.<sup>454</sup> Those that considered giving up and returning home were often

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450 introduced through an Executive Act of Legislative Content (ΠΝΠ) in April 2020 – see Art. 24 FEK A' 84/13-4-2020

451 mainly originating from Albania and offering work in Northern and Western Greece.

452 See above, with regards to healthcare for migrant workers in Greece.

453 Michael Leibfingler, Veronika Prieler, Karin Schwiter, Jennifer Steiner, Aranka Benazha, and Helma Lutz, "Impact of COVID-19 Policy Responses on Live-In Care Workers in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland." (*Journal of Long-Term Care*, 2020), <https://journal.ilpnetwork.org/articles/10.31389/jltc.51/>.

454 Minor, "Die Auswirkungen der Corona-Krise auf das Kommunikationsverhalten von polnischen 24-Stunden-Betreuungskräften

threatened with fines by transnational recruitment agencies that had placed them in the clients' homes.

When Germany closed its eastern border, migrant workers were pressured to extend their time working in the country to continue providing care. They faced even tougher work demands and psychological strain than usual, as their client's relatives avoided visiting, leaving them to shoulder the full responsibility for their care. Some even forbade migrants from leaving their household altogether, fearing that they would bring home the virus. Unremunerated overwork, isolation and uncertainty were widespread as migrant care workers were continuously 'on-call' for weeks on end, with no relief and with no certainty as to how long Covid-19 lockdown restrictions would last.<sup>455</sup>

In Spain, the pandemic also led to the unemployment of home care workers. Some of their clients died while others could no longer afford private home care. Irregularly employed workers were hit the hardest, accounting for the majority of the job losses.<sup>456</sup> In other cases, relatives, who were working from home, took over the care of their relatives.

Many migrant care workers were not eligible for social security schemes introduced (Boxes 7:1 and 7:2) to ameliorate the effects of the pandemic. Undocumented migrant workers fared worse, eligible neither for the subsidy nor for universal basic income payments.<sup>457</sup>

#### **Box 7:1 Introduction of special subsidy for domestic workers<sup>458</sup> (Spain)**

In March 2020, Spain's government approved a special subsidy for domestic workers,<sup>459</sup> offering coverage for the first time to unemployed members of this group. However, this scheme only lasted until June 2020 and was only granted to those whose unemployment was caused by Covid-19. Difficulties in delivering the scheme left many otherwise eligible workers without protection. It should also be noted that eligible domestic workers who had lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic waited six months to receive the compensation. Even so, according to the State Secretary for Employment, some 52,000 female workers have applied for this subsidy.

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(sog. Live-Ins) im Rahmen des Projektes MB 4.0.(The impact of the Corona crisis on the communication behaviour of Polish 24-hour care workers (so-called Live-ins) in the context of the MB 4.0 project)" (Minor, 2020), [https://minor-kontor.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Minor\\_MB4.0\\_Zwischenbericht-Corona-April-Pflege\\_2020.docx.pdf](https://minor-kontor.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Minor_MB4.0_Zwischenbericht-Corona-April-Pflege_2020.docx.pdf)

455 Anna Safuta and Kristin Noack "A Pandemic, and Then What? The Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Migrant Care Workers in Germany." (Routed Magazine. June 20, 2020), <https://www.routedmagazine.com/care-workers-germany> .

456 According to Labour Force data, between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020, 97,500 fewer people were employed in domestic work (16.8 per cent), with most job losses occurring in the latter period. Irregularly employed workers accounted for 77,500 of the job losses recorded over this period (79.5 per cent of total). See, Instituto Nacional De Estadística, "Labor Force Survey (Private sector employees by sex and industry - 2019)" (Instituto Nacional de Estadística , 2019), <https://www.ine.es>

457 Those were only accessible to migrants who could prove one year's legal residence in Spain.

458 Subsidio extraordinario por falta de actividad para las personas integradas en el Sistema Especial de Empleados de Hogar del Régimen General de la Seguridad Social. <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2020/04/01/pdfs/BOE-A-2020-4208.pdf>

459 It should be noted that stipends were only paid out from July 2020, which left regular workers who lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic without any compensatory source of income for up to six months.

### Box 7:2 Introduction of special subsidy for individuals employing domestic workers (Spain)

During the pandemic, the Department of Work, Social Affairs and Families of the Catalan Government (Generalitat de Catalunya) approved a measure to subsidise the social security contributions of individuals who reported employing domestic workers, for one year. The subsidy incentivised employers of undocumented domestic workers to formalise their employment, by reducing the related costs. This in turn helped reduce the numbers of undocumented migrant workers in the sector and meant that those receiving social security contributions were also able to access disability benefits in the event that they became ill.

Domestic workers (including home care workers) who had lost income then struggled to pay rent. Some who rented formally and were regularly employed could benefit from a set of government measures introduced in April 2020 to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 for renters, including rent moratoria, subsidies and a suspension of evictions.<sup>460</sup> However those in informal employment, including migrant care workers, who rented rooms informally, could not benefit, despite tending to be more financially vulnerable.

As in Germany, those live-in care workers in Spain who kept their jobs were forced to lock down at home with their clients if they wanted to keep their jobs. While those employed in hospitals, nursing homes and other care companies worked longer hours and did not have time off.

## 7.5 Public responses and activism

The pandemic led to wider recognition of migrant workers' essential role in the economies and welfare systems of the four countries examined in the report, including maintaining the food supply during lockdown. It pushed many migrant workers to actively engage in the civic and political life of their host countries. Their exploitative and inadequate working and living conditions underpinned various active initiatives with migrant associations, civil society organisations and trade unions, which demonstrated these actors' important role as vectors of migrant worker active engagement in the civic and political life of their host countries.

Germany's gap in care created by the disruption to the flow of live-in care workers moving across its eastern border brought its dependence on migrant care workers back onto the political agenda. For the past few decades, this informal sector has become the de facto third pillar of care for the elderly and disabled<sup>461</sup> (alongside inpatient and outpatient elderly care).<sup>462</sup> Live-in care workers that agreed to stay in Germany rather than return home at the end of their rotas were described as "devoted and dedicated heroines."<sup>463</sup>

The German agricultural sector's dependence on migration was highlighted by the growth in demand for essential goods during the pandemic. Despite closing borders, the government conceded to pressures by the farmers' lobby to "save the German asparagus"<sup>464</sup> by providing special exemptions to approximately

460 Clara-Laeila Laudette, "Spain Extends Rent Moratorium amid Worsening COVID-19 Crisis." (Reuters. Thomson Reuters, January 26, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-spain-rent/spain-extends-rent-moratorium-amid-worsening-covid-19-crisis-idUKL8N2K13M8>.

461 VHBP, "Bundesverband für häusliche Betreuung und Pflege e.V. – vhbp". (VHBP. Verband für häusliche Betreuung und Pflege e.V., 2021), <https://www.vhbp.de>.

462 Michael Leiblfinger, Veronika Prieler, Karin Schwiter, Jennifer Steiner, Aranka Benazha, and Helma Lutz, "Impact of COVID-19 Policy Responses on Live-In Care Workers in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland." (*Journal of Long-Term Care*, 2020), <https://journal.ilpnetwork.org/articles/10.31389/jltc.51/>.

463 *ibid*

464 This wording recurred across media portrayals of the topic. It should also be emphasised that prior to the government's exceptional opening of the borders to agricultural migrant workers, the German farmers' association tried to recruit "harvest helpers" ("Erntehelfer") from the German population to make up for lost migrant labour. It was not the first attempt of this sort in Germany's recent history and, as happened in the past, the initiative turned out to be unsuccessful. This was due to the sector's hard working conditions,

40,000 seasonal migrant workers to enter the country. Images of Romanian seasonal workers flown in by charter flight appeared across the media. Workers in the agri-food sector were publicly recognised as 'system relevant' (i.e. critical to the functioning of an essential economic sector). This led to more open debates on the working and living conditions of seasonal migrant workers,<sup>465</sup> and drove demands for stronger protections for workers in the sector, especially in relation to health safeguards.

Several political parties as well as the Ministry of Employment acknowledged the structural problems in the employment of a seasonal workforce.<sup>466</sup> Although the focus was on the precarious and potentially dangerous living conditions of seasonal migrant workers, debate was also had on minimum wage violations and the lack of access to the social security system by this group of workers.

In May 2020, the German union FAU supported agricultural workers in direct action against violation of their employment contracts and poor working conditions. (see Box 7:3). It was the first time that FAU had been involved in direct action with agricultural seasonal workers. However, only days after the strike and the demonstrations, the migrants who had been involved left Bornheim to further seasonal employment, or made their way home much sooner – and with much less income – than they had planned to.

Nevertheless, it shows the potential for migrant workers and civil society actors to join forces and lead successful campaigns. It remains to be seen if an offer more tailored to the needs of seasonal migrant workers will succeed in bringing any positive change in terms of their participation in unions.

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and German harvest helpers' lack of specialised knowledge and experience. See, Dorothea Biaback Anong, "Saisonarbeitskräfte dringend benötigt". Das Regime Landwirtschaftlicher Saisonarbeit in Deutschland im Kontext der Corona-Pandemie." ("Seasonal workers urgently needed". The regime of seasonal agricultural work in Germany in the framework of the Corona-Pandemic.) IMIS Working Paper 09, Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien (IMIS) der Universität Osnabrück, (2021), [https://www.imis-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4\\_Publikationen/PDFs/IMIS\\_WP09\\_Saisonarbeit\\_BiabackAnong.pdf](https://www.imis-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4_Publikationen/PDFs/IMIS_WP09_Saisonarbeit_BiabackAnong.pdf)

465 Manès Weisskircher, "Arbeitsmigration während der Corona-Pandemie. Saisonarbeitskräfte aus Mittel- Und Osteuropa in der Deutschen Landwirtschaft (Labour Migration during the Corona Pandemic. Seasonal workers from Central and Eastern Europe in German agriculture)" (MIDEM-Policy Paper 01/21, 2021).

466 Dorothea Biaback Anong, "Saisonarbeitskräfte dringend benötigt." Das Regime Landwirtschaftlicher Saisonarbeit in Deutschland im Kontext der Corona-Pandemie." ("Seasonal workers urgently needed". The regime of seasonal agricultural work in Germany in the framework of the Corona-Pandemic). IMIS Working Paper 09, *Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien* (IMIS) der Universität Osnabrück, (2021), [https://www.imis-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4\\_Publikationen/PDFs/IMIS\\_WP09\\_Saisonarbeit\\_BiabackAnong.pdf](https://www.imis-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4_Publikationen/PDFs/IMIS_WP09_Saisonarbeit_BiabackAnong.pdf)



### Box 7:3 FAU Union work with the Bornheim workers (Germany) <sup>467</sup>

In May 2020, 200 Romanian seasonal workers went on strike from the Spargel & Erdbeerhof Ritter farm in Bornheim, near Bonn, which specialises in growing asparagus and strawberries. Despite insolvency proceedings, the farm hired 300 foreign workers on a three month contract. After one month, the migrants were informed they were no longer needed and should leave the farm. Not everyone received payment, and payments that were received did not correspond to the amount of work performed and were in violation of minimum wage regulation. The workers had been living in inadequate, overcrowded accommodation, with a lack of basic amenities and food.

Despite difficulties accessing the workers, including language barriers and the conduct of private security employed on the farm, FAU engaged with the striking workers, informing them of their rights, employing a lawyer to negotiate on their behalf and by supporting their demonstrations. Demands included payment for three months' work, support in relocating to other farms; payment of sick leave and travel expenses. The union also promoted the visibility of the migrants' fight in the press and public debate. Many of the workers decided to take legal action against the insolvency administrator, and their claims are still pending before the Labour Tribunal in Bonn.

In April 2021, the legal dispute between the migrant workers and the insolvency administration of Spargel & Erdbeerhof Ritter farm concluded with an extrajudicial agreement on their wage arrears.

The aforementioned outbreaks of Covid-19 in Germany's meat industry also animated public and political debate. They revealed not only the violation of hygiene and social distancing measures implemented to prevent the spread of the virus, but also shed light on exploitative working conditions in the sector.<sup>468</sup> Due to union lobbying during the pandemic, subcontracting has been banned in the industry, and temporary /contract work limited by time and number of workers. An electronic working time measurement is now mandatory. It remains to be seen if these changes in the legislation will bring any long-term improvements in the sector.

The spread of Covid-19 in Irish meat processing plants exposed the shared concerns of migrants and labour unions, and importantly, situated low paid, vulnerable migrant workers within an established network of advocacy and representation to policymakers. Revelations about the unsafe working conditions in these plants culminated in a special parliamentary debate in August 2020 devoted to these outbreaks. Representatives from Ireland's trade unions were invited to give evidence on breaches of working standards and health standards in infected plants.<sup>469</sup> Speaking in that debate, Greg Ennis stated that: "[i]t is notable that circa 90 per cent of workers in the industry do not have sick pay, forcing vulnerable workers to go to work, even if they are feeling unwell with possible Covid-19 symptoms."

The crisis has revealed the negative impact of weak union representation on access to sick pay and adequate oversight of health and safety. The shared concerns and collaboration between labour unions, civil society organisations representing migrant communities, and migrant workers have provided increasing opportunities for social cohesion and social solidarity. They have situated low paid, vulnerable workers within an established network of advocacy and representation to policymakers. CSOs such as MRCI, have conducted regular surveys of migrants, especially those who are undocumented,<sup>470</sup> voicing their concerns to

467 Free Workers' Union (FAU), "Freie Arbeiter\*innen-Union Bonn, Mehr als nur Gewerkschaft". (Free Workers' Union (FAU), 202) <https://bonn.fau.org/en/>.

468 Peter Birke, "Die Fleischindustrie in der Coronakrise: Eine Studie zu Migration, Arbeit und multipler Prekarität". (The meat industry in the Corona-crisis: A study on migration, work and multiple precariousness). *DuEPublico Online* no. 29 (2021): 1–47, [https://duepublico2.uni-due.de/receive/duepublico\\_mods\\_00074351](https://duepublico2.uni-due.de/receive/duepublico_mods_00074351)

469 Houses of the Oireachtas, "Special Committee on Covid-19 Response debate." (2020), [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/special\\_committee\\_on\\_covid-19\\_response/2020-08-13/3/](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/special_committee_on_covid-19_response/2020-08-13/3/)

470 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "Working to the Bone: The Experiences of Migrant Workers in the Meat Sector in Ireland." (MRCI, 2020), [https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report\\_Working-to-the-bone\\_final.pdf](https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report_Working-to-the-bone_final.pdf).

the government. Migrant workers have developed a platform for advocacy and engagement in Irish civic and political life by engaging as union members, participating in events and organising other workers. Some have also become union staff members specialised in specific industries.

The pandemic also increased the public visibility of seasonal migrant workers in the agricultural sector in Spain. It became evident that their working and living conditions made it extremely difficult to implement public health strategies. The media spotlight turned on the outbreaks of Covid-19 among agricultural migrant workers in Huee and Lleida<sup>471</sup> and triggered a wider public debate on the need to improve them. Echoing the public's concerns, the Spanish ombudsman issued a declaration in July 2020, urging local governments and employers to "seek a coordinated and urgent solution to end the degradation in which seasonal agricultural workers live in various areas of Spain" and that the pandemic had revealed "in all its crudeness, problems that have been more or less ignored for a long time, causing the seams of the system to burst."<sup>472</sup>

In Ireland, CSOs and trade unions were instrumental in alerting the public to the challenges faced by migrant workers across different sectors. MRCI, for example, conducted regular surveys of migrant workers, documenting the exploitation and work abuses commonly experienced in the meat processing sector.<sup>473</sup> This was part of a wider campaign for care workers, which led to the founding of an independent care cooperative run by migrant women under the auspices of MRCI.<sup>474</sup> Trade unions, such as SIPTU, were also able to successfully push for improvements in migrants' working conditions, representing them before parliament alongside other civil society organisations, and speaking to the media as a way of influencing changes in legislation and improving their status.<sup>475</sup>

#### Box 7:4 Migrant workers and SIPTU (Ireland)

SIPTU represents over 180,000 workers across the Irish economy. During the pandemic, it played an instrumental role advocating for improvements in migrants' working rights in both care and the agricultural sectors. Its involvement (along with several other large unions) in parliamentary debates following the Covid-19 outbreaks in Ireland's meat packing plants gave political voice to the concerns of migrant workers. A campaign by SIPTU to improve pay and working conditions for childcare workers paved the way for the establishment of a Joint Labour Committee in July 2021, tasked with setting better wages in the sector.<sup>476</sup>

In the German agricultural sector, the imposition of contact restrictions and quarantines across the country prevented CSOs and other officials from visiting agricultural work sites at a time when many migrant workers were being made to work long hours and exposed to unhygienic working conditions. Civic initiatives like *Faire Mobilität* - which use site visits to advise migrants about their labour rights - found it harder to operate and support agricultural workers. In an effort to overcome these obstacles, several organisations established so-called "Corona hotlines" in multiple languages.<sup>477</sup> These allowed migrant workers to seek advice on their

471 Oriol Güell, Virginia López Enano, "Spain Reports 73 Active Coronavirus Outbreaks, Six More in 24 Hours" (EL PAÍS English Edition, July 10, 2020). <https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-07-10/spain-reports-73-active-coronavirus-outbreaks-six-more-in-24-hours.html>.

472 Defensor del Pueblo (Ombudsman), "Situación trabajadoras y trabajadores temporeros (Situation of temporary workers)". (Defensor del Pueblo (Ombudsman), 2020) <https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/noticias/situacion-trabajadoras-trabajadores-temporeros/>.

473 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "Working to the Bone: The Experiences of Migrant Workers in the Meat Sector in Ireland" (MRCI, 2020). [https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report\\_Working-to-the-bone\\_final.pdf](https://www.mrci.ie/app/uploads/2020/11/Report_Working-to-the-bone_final.pdf).

474 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, "Great Care Co-Op." (MRCI, October 8, 2021), <https://www.mrci.ie/great-care-co-op>. See also, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/migrant-women-create-ireland-s-first-carers-co-operative-1.4310938>

475 Interview IE.17.

476 Martin Wall, "Government approves establishment of new system for setting pay in childcare sector" (The Irish Times, June 21, 2021).

477 See for example the Corona Hotline established by Faire Mobilität. "Informationen Und Hotline (Information and Hotline)."

labour rights and pandemic-related regulations.

In Spain, domestic worker associations remained organised throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns despite being one of the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. Together with feminist groups, these provided financial assistance and food, among other essential services (see Box 7:5) in the absence of adequate public relief measures, in alleviating hardship among those who had lost their jobs, and in some cases, also their homes. A coalition of CSOs and undocumented migrant groups also launched the “Regularisation Now” campaign,<sup>478</sup> which called on policymakers to approve an extraordinary regularisation process for migrants with irregular status. Inspired by the success of similar initiatives in Italy and Portugal, the campaign crystallised in the submission of a resolution to Spain’s congress, supported by the minority parties on the Left. It did not pass, blocked by all the parties on the Right, but also by the Left parties currently in government, with the questionable argument that national and European regulation only allow case-by-case regularisation.

#### **Box 7:5 Civic initiatives during the pandemic (Spain)**

- Support provided by domestic worker associations, together with feminist groups, included:
- Strike funds to provide financial assistance to domestic workers made redundant
- Online psychosocial support groups
- Surveys used to identify rights violations during the pandemic
- Campaigns in the media and social networks in favour of a public subsidy for domestic workers
- The creation of an outreach group of advisors to assist migrants with applications for the special social security subsidy for domestic workers introduced by the Spanish government
- The creation of outreach groups to help workers apply for the special social security subsidy for domestic workers, and for universal basic income
- The creation of an outreach group to assist with the processing of claims for compensation by workers who had been dismissed, locked down without pay, and sexually abused by employers
- Covid-19 health and safety workshops delivered by volunteer doctors
- An interpreting service in Madrid to translate between migrant workers and health workers
- Collaboration in the organisation of “charity pantries” (foodbanks) and the distribution of food donated by neighbours.

These various mutual support and self-management initiatives were launched at short notice in the absence of any state support for thousands of domestic workers - both migrant and local - who required additional help and relief during the pandemic.

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Informationen. (Faire Mobilität, 2021), <https://www.faire-mobilitaet.de/informationen>.

478 For more information on this campaign, see, <https://regularizacionya.com/>

## 7.6 Conclusion

Migrant workers in the agricultural and care sectors of the countries examined in this report were spared none of the hardships of the pandemic. Many found themselves without work. Others were forced to work under even more intense, or isolated conditions than usual. Though the full impact of Covid-19 on their health remains uncertain, current evidence suggests that migrant workers in both sectors were comparatively vulnerable to infection. Agricultural employers' disregard for health and safety regulations exacerbated health outcomes for migrants employed in meat processing plants. The pandemic therefore amplified the already challenging working and living conditions experienced by these workers.

Migrant workers received unprecedented levels of attention and sympathy during the pandemic. Their essential role in the social and economic fabrics of their host countries became evident to large sections of the public, as did the abusive standards of work and life to which many are subject. Public support galvanised a series of civic and political initiatives to help migrants overcome financial hardships, combat exploitation, and improve their working and living conditions. These were often led by coalitions of CSOs, trade unions and migrant worker networks. Though not always successful, such initiatives provided migrant workers with the opportunities to reach beyond migrant networks and engage with a broader gamut of civic and political actors in their host societies.

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# 8. CONCLUSION

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## 8. CONCLUSION

This report has found that migrants employed in agriculture and care in Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain, are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage. The systematic exclusion from basic social rights and protections, isolated living situations and exploitative working conditions experienced by migrant workers pose significant obstacles to their capacity to form local connections and actively participate in the civic life of their communities.

Drawing on these findings, the report argues that migrant workers' conditions undermine social cohesion in all four countries studied. Social cohesion is defined in terms of (i) the social rights and economic opportunities enjoyed by migrants in a host country, and (ii) the opportunities available to migrants to build local relationships and participate in the civic life of the host country. The working and living conditions documented in this report impede both dimensions of social cohesion. They perpetuate a two-tier model of society in which migrant workers are left politically, economically, socially, and civically excluded.

Some migrant workers fare worse than others. Migration status and country origin can be important determinants of a migrant workers' entitlement to social rights and protections. These will in turn affect their working conditions. Generally speaking, undocumented TCNs are the most vulnerable migrant worker category. EEA migrants - particularly those who are permanently settled and who possess recognised professional qualifications - fare better and may even enjoy occupational mobility. These variations notwithstanding, exclusion and exploitation are experienced by a wide range of migrant workers in the agricultural and care sectors.

### ***Migrant workers' living and working conditions***

Migrant workers in agriculture and care are subject to discriminatory migration and labour laws that deny them equal access to social rights, employment protections and economic opportunities. The research conducted in the case study countries shows that migrant workers of all backgrounds - but particularly those from outside the EEA and those working in the informal economy - do not enjoy the same social rights and protections afforded to local workers. Depending on the country, they may be legally barred from accessing healthcare, social security, unemployment insurance and other basic forms of labour protection.

At work, migrants are often isolated, having little contact with people other than co-workers, employers and (in the case of migrant care workers) their care clients. Many of them work and live in the same place – that is, in remote rural sites or in their care clients' isolated households. In Spain and Ireland, the report also found migrant workers living in conditions, such as overcrowding, that compound the already strenuous and low pay conditions characterising work in the agriculture and care sectors.

Migrants' isolated living conditions and exclusion from their host countries' basic rights and protections coexist with - and in many ways facilitate – the exploitative conditions of employment that many of them encounter in the workplace. Employers in the agricultural and care sectors use migrants as a cheap, expendable workforce. They resort to dubious employment practices, such as making illegal deductions from pay, extending workdays and responsibilities without extra pay, and disregarding health and safety standards in the workplace. These abuses are hard to prove and prosecute, as public labour inspectors and migrant NGOs struggle to visit migrant workers' isolated working sites. When migrant workers decide to sue an employer directly, they often find that the legal process is long, bureaucratic and costly.

Given these conditions, it is not surprising that migrant workers struggle to build supportive social networks and participate in their communities' civic life. Migrant workers are in many ways invisible - tucked away in the countryside and in client households, where they are overworked and underpaid. They have neither the free time nor the resources required for active socialising and organised civic participation. Their isolation

and geographical remoteness also mean that civic organisations find it difficult to reach migrant workers. In short, migrant workers find themselves living separate and unequal lives.

### ***Civic engagement and social cohesion***

Alongside migrant workers' difficult living and working conditions, the report highlights the instrumental role that NGOs, trade unions and migrant-led organisations can play in facilitating collective actions that successfully defend migrants workers' rights and improve their living and working conditions in the agricultural and care sectors. Such organisations also assist migrant workers with broader integration challenges: they facilitate structured contact between migrants and local communities, help migrants strengthen their language skills, and help them navigate host countries' bureaucracies.

Active civic participation should be seen as a key policy vehicle for the advancement of an inclusive, rights-based approach to integration. Civic organisations offer migrant workers the opportunity to become actively involved in their host societies and workplaces. They provide social platforms for migrants, domestic workers and other community members to collectively pursue shared goals and develop inclusive solidarity networks. The promotion of such platforms and activities is consistent with a migrant integration strategy that endeavours to enhance social cohesion.

Unfortunately, NGOs and trade unions struggle to reach migrant workers in the remote and isolated environments of both the agricultural and care sectors. Trade unions, moreover, tend to operate rigid recruitment structures that are ill-suited to organise informal and temporary migrant worker populations. The majority of migrant workers in the countries studied therefore remain outside the purview of union action.

### ***Lessons for policy***

The findings of this report highlight the way that different forms of migrant exclusion compound and reinforce each other. The lack of engagement between migrant workers and civil society structures, such as NGOs and trade unions, deprives them of opportunities to build solidarity and mobilise organised assistance that could help improve working and living conditions. Conversely, migrants' isolated living and working environments, and their exploitative working conditions, exclude them from opportunities to participate in civil society and broader community life. That this is the reality for so many migrant workers in Europe's agricultural and care sectors runs counter to the key principles of the European Union's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027).<sup>479</sup>

The key policy recommendation coming out of this report is that social cohesion should be mainstreamed into migrant integration policy. The EU Action Plan's commitments to promoting intercultural contact, providing equal social rights, and facilitating equal access to economic opportunities for migrants are important and helpful steps in this direction. Nevertheless, they provide insufficient mechanisms for more active and civic forms of inclusion. Policymakers should recognise the importance of facilitating migrants' access to civic platforms and supporting workplace initiatives that would help migrants connect with local communities and build effective solidarity networks. NGOs and trade unions should be key policy partners in this effort.

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479 European Commission, "Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027" (EU Commission , November 24, 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files\\_en?file=2020-11/action\\_plan\\_on\\_integration\\_and\\_inclusion\\_2021-2027.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files_en?file=2020-11/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf).

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# **9. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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# 9. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These policy recommendations are based on independent research, consisting of secondary quantitative data analysis and semi-structured interviews conducted on the experience of agricultural and care sector migrant workers in Ireland, Germany, Greece and Spain by TASC and its partner organisations. Migrant workers experience exploitative and abusive working conditions that reinforce their social and economic exclusion. Long hours spent in remote and isolated work environments undermine their opportunities to form local social networks and participate in community initiatives. Low pay, exploitative employment, and non-existing alternative employment opportunities perpetuate migrant workers' precariousness and prevent their long-term social mobility.

There is much in common in terms of what the four countries require of the EU, including changes to policy, development of new policy approaches, and funding. These are outlined in the EU-wide recommendations. They are followed by country-specific recommendations on targeting funding and support for civil society, migrants' access to legal aid, language training, housing and public services, policy language, anti-racism laws and migrant workers' rights. Considered together, these recommendations highlight ways of promoting migrant workers' integration beyond mere rights-based solutions. They offer ways of enhancing social inclusion and cohesion in communities that host migrants employed in agriculture and care.

It ought to be noted that 'EU-wide recommendations' refer both to policies that can be pursued through EU level regulation and the exercise of relevant exclusive and shared competences of the European Union, and those policies and objectives that either fall within the exclusive regulatory competence of Member States or can better be achieved through national level regulation, with due regard to the principles of conferral and subsidiarity, with the support of the EU.

## 9.1 EU-wide recommendations

### Integration/social cohesion

- Develop a new EU approach (new common principles) to migration that fleshes out social cohesion.
  - The principles grounding the concept of Social Cohesion should include equal economic opportunities, fair employment, social rights, civic and political participation, and solidarity.
  - Where relevant, use the Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion<sup>480</sup> (2010) as a guide for social cohesion policymaking (in particular, articles 10 and 12).

*Responsibility: European commission*

- Provide greater support for civil society organisations (NGOs, trade unions and migrant associations) to develop migrant recruitment initiatives.
  - Define a stronger role for civil society organisations and trade unions in the EU integration policy framework, as expressed in the Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027)<sup>481</sup>.
  - Incorporate indicators of solidarity into the EU integration policy framework.

*Responsibility: European commission and member states*

- Provide funding to support cross community initiatives to promote local civic and political engagement amongst migrants.

480 [https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/2010Strategy\\_ActionPlan\\_SocialCohesion.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/2010Strategy_ActionPlan_SocialCohesion.pdf)

481 [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/ec-reveals-its-new-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/ec-reveals-its-new-eu-action-plan-integration-and-inclusion-2021-2027_en)

- Encourage the development of migrant worker associations.
- Migrant workers and their associations need spaces to meet and share information and create mutual support networks.
- Work with employers and trade unions to improve access to language courses, public services, knowledge of worker rights, community support services, and opportunities for civic and political engagement.
- Facilitate regular government consultation with migrant advocacy groups in both sectors. The Network of Regional Hubs and the European Committee of Regions should commit to facilitating and supporting such consultation at the local level, given the importance of region-specific policies in the area.
- Further harmonise policies and procedures on the recognition of qualifications.
  - particularly qualifications obtained in third countries.
  - including strengthening the recognition of non-formal forms of training.
  - including through the European Qualification Framework and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.
- Support and promote the establishment of more flexible language course provision for migrant workers.
  - Include access to courses on evenings and weekends; in more rural locations; online and in migrants' countries of origin before arriving in host countries.
- Expand projects and organisations offering information and support to migrant workers in their languages.
  - These are vital for creating the necessary preconditions for enhancing social cohesion and enabling more participation.
- Promote greater public awareness of the contribution made by care and agricultural workers to the economy; including the role of migrants within both workforces.

*Responsibility: European commission and member states*

### **Migrant labour rights and employment conditions**

- Reform immigration regulations, expanding secure pathways to regularisation for third country migrants.
  - In Spain, for example, these indirectly condemn migrant workers to work in the underground economy for at least three years until they can obtain a work and residency permit on the grounds of their connections to the community.
- Ensure that any EU initiative to coordinate, support and promote minimum wage setting national policies:
  - Expressly includes agriculture and agricultural (typical and atypical, seasonal or not) migrant and immigrant workers, and encourages the inclusion of asylum seekers. This would provide a substantial improvement in wages for agricultural migrant workers in countries like Greece and Spain, who have lower minimum wages compared to the rest of the EU.<sup>482</sup>
  - Provides that (typical and atypical, including 'irregular') migrant workers are to be granted the same terms as local workers. The wording of Art.2 of the proposed [directive on adequate minimum wages in the European Union](#) appears to achieve that objective. However, express reference in the Explanations

<sup>482</sup> Eurostat, "Minimum wage statistics - Statistics Explained," Eurostat: Statistics Explained, (Eurostat, August 2021), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Minimum\\_wage\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Minimum_wage_statistics)

could be of benefit.

- Respects and gives due deference to national systems of collective autonomy and encourages collective bargaining. This also applies to Article 4 of the proposed directive, which sets out to promote collective bargaining on wage settling across the EU.
- Develops a framework for effective transnational collective bargaining (Art.154(1) TFEU) that allows for the autonomous creation and functioning of transnational worker and employer associations. In any such framework migrant workers should be eligible to participate regardless of nationality or EU citizenship.
- Promote a living wage requirement for workers in both sectors.
  - The UK provides a good example of Living wage campaigning.
- Strengthen basic labour rights, including occupational health and safety measures and the adequacy of employer-provided accommodation.
- Amend EU legislation to prevent transnational exploitation of loopholes in labour law regulations.
  - For example, via incomplete posting work regulations that effectively facilitate the non-paying of social security to transnational EU workers.
  - Enhance the relevant monitoring capacity of the European Labour Authority.
- Ensure, in exercising external relations competences, particularly within the scope of Art.3(1)(e) and 3(2) TFEU, and Art.4(4) TFEU, that:
  - European aid conditionality includes obligations to respect workers' rights. This will facilitate the prevention of the rise of conditions of vulnerability that fuel illegal immigration and the subsequent exploitation of such immigrant workers within the EU.
  - Trade or any other bi-lateral agreements with non-EU states should include conditions aimed at the respect of the rights of (seasonal or not) migrant workers.
- Increase labour inspections, frequency of enforcement and higher sanctioning, to discourage employers from exploitative practices and reduce labour rights violations.
  - Member states should develop provisions to allow for labour inspections to take place on private agricultural land and households employing care workers.
  - The European Labour Authority should assist member states' labour inspections authorities, particularly in sectors of invisible work, such as agriculture and care. Inter alia, by providing technical support and research, and through transnational coordination.
- Improve public awareness of the prevalence of labour law violation and exploitation of migrant workers.
- Improve access to the justice system for victims of labour rights violations.
  - Introduce legal aid for labour rights violation cases, as appropriate.
  - Provide administrative support for migrant workers through legal proceedings, including as regards language support. Faster access to courts and judicial hearings could be achieved through the automatic linking of inspections with the opening of legal proceedings for non-paid wages.

*Responsibility: Member states  
(But, consider recommendations through European Semester mechanisms)*

- Facilitate evidence-based policymaking by improving data collection, particularly more precise occupational categorisation, in EU survey instruments (such as EUROSTAT), on migrants employed in the agricultural and care sectors in each EU country.

## **Agriculture**

- Reconfigure the narrative of agriculture at an EU level to incorporate sustainability, social justice and re-localism.
  - This includes recognition that the dominant economic model serving global industrial/mass production is not sustainable.
- Promote joined-up reform of the sector.
  - Initiatives focused exclusively on single aspects, such as the protection of nature, consumer rights or fair working conditions, should work together and establish common aims. Changes in the CAP policy should consider all these elements at once. The cross-compliance regulation that it entails (bonus payments for farmers respecting environmental standards) should be expanded to cover compliance with labour rights standards.
- Ensure that farmers' receipt of income support under the new Common Agricultural Policy 2023-27 is conditional on upholding workplace health and safety standards, EU labour standards and guaranteeing equal and fair pay for both permanent and seasonal migrant workers.
  - Fair pay and respect for labour standards should be central elements in the social conditionality stipulations of the new CAP 2023-2027 cross-compliance regulations.
  - In Spain, for example, this would be an important incentive to improve migrant workers' conditions, since this aid accounts for 25 per cent of agricultural income.
- Encourage member states to establish the legal requirement for local authorities and employers to provide adequate housing for migrant workers in rural areas.
- Ensure through regular inspections that seasonal workers are living in adequate housing and have access to adequate (not overcrowded) transportation.

*Responsibility: EU European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)*

- Improve the education and training of migrant labourers.
  - Recently, the Agricultural University of Athens and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in Greece, signed an agreement for the training and education of refugees and migrants to develop employment in the primary sector.

*Responsibility: European Commission (via ESF+ and ERDF funding) and member states*

## **Care sector**

- Promote greater recognition of the role of care work in society within the public discussion of the care crisis, as well as a greater awareness of the work of live-in care workers.
 

*Responsibility: European Commission*

  - Reconsider the narrative of care, not as a passive activity, but one that integrates education and personal fulfilment, thus elevating the status of the work and enhancing its positive impact.
- Develop specific EU policy proposals on migration and care of older people, including obligatory minimum standards of employment and social protection afforded to 'live-in' care workers.

- Proposals should build on the general recommendations set out in the European Parliament resolution on women domestic workers and carers in the EU 28 (April 2016).<sup>483</sup>
- Reform regulations and improve social protection for domestic workers.
  - Legal reform is needed to end discrimination against domestic workers and extend their social protection, bringing it into line with that of other groups of workers, especially in terms of unemployment benefits. Their working conditions highlight the shortcomings of the public care system.
- Ensure employers of domestic workers are aware of their employees' rights and likewise, respect those rights, as domestic workers have the same employment rights and protections as any other employee under national law.
- Facilitate effective monitoring and enforcement of national labour and care standards in domestic and home care employment settings by EU member states.

*Responsibility: European Labour Authority*

- Assist with efforts to ensure that care workers' skills match the health and emotional needs of clients, and that care workers are not asked to do work beyond their remit.
- Promote and support migrant workers' online community/social/political participation.
  - Social media is a crucial way for live-in migrant care workers to access information on their rights. It can also help overcome the psychological consequences of their isolated employment and create a sense of community, although primarily an "online" one.

*Responsibility: European Commission and member states*

- Simplify and accelerate the recognition of previous care qualifications and work experience to:
  - make employment in the care sector more attractive to migrant workers and contribute to addressing the care crisis.
  - enable qualified migrant workers to secure positions appropriate for their training and experience.
  - positively contribute to migrant workers' occupational status and through better remuneration and working conditions, to their wellbeing, satisfaction and positive attitude to the host country.

## 9.2 Country-specific recommendations

### IRELAND

1. Ireland should join the Employers Sanctions' Directive, (only Ireland and Denmark are exempt), which stops employers recruiting and ill-treating migrant workers.
2. Ensure that the National Action Plan Against Racism and the process of implementation include work-based discrimination.
  - This is especially relevant to employees who are vulnerable to exploitation and racism because of their visa status and the nature of their job (isolation, long and/or irregular hours in a household).
3. Continue to push for the implementation and evaluation of integration strategies at a local level.

<sup>483</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0203\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0203_EN.html)

4. Beyond regular monitoring (ESRI reports), convene a government-led conference on the National Integration Strategy to consider its future and develop a new strategy that includes social cohesion.
5. Broaden the definition of social cohesion to include opportunities for civic engagement and trade union participation for migrants.
  - In particular, this applies to recent migrants. It would include regularly evaluating levels of engagement (thus, looking beyond the number of migrants in political office.)
6. Issue the required number of visas for non-EU/EEA citizens to work as healthcare assistants in both nursing homes and for home-based care in order to meet demand.
7. Allow for undocumented workers or workers on student or other time-limited visas working as HCAs or in domestic work to regularise their employment status.
8. Subsidise and legislate for training during working hours for all employees in care occupations to improve qualifications of HCAs in home care and staff in childcare.
9. Establish, similar to the Joint Labour Committee to improve pay in childcare, a JLC in home care and nursing home care to encourage all areas of care to become viable, longer-term job opportunities.
10. Invest in community-based initiatives that must include both migrants and Irish citizens in order to cultivate local social networks and social solidarity.
  - See the Near Neighbours programme in the UK as an example.<sup>484</sup>

## GERMANY

### Agriculture

1. Establish a new German legal framework for seasonal employment and implement it at national level.
  - Short-term employment should be included in the social security system. This would support agricultural migrant workers by extending seasonal workers' eligibility for unemployment and health care insurance, as well as pension rights.
2. Develop new strategies allowing the sector to remain competitive while maintaining workers' rights.
  - These should include fostering alternative or shorter supply chains.

### Care

3. Provide greater security of employment in the sector, including direct employment by private households.
  - This would guarantee not only full protection under German labour and social law, but also the chance to gain a foothold in Germany for those migrants willing to remain in the country permanently.
4. Establish pathways to allow live-in migrant care workers to transition into the formal care sector.
  - This would help tackle staff shortages in the formal care sector and create occupational mobility opportunities into more secure and unionised care jobs for migrants employed in Germany's informal care sector.

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484 <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/about>

## GREECE

### Agriculture

1. Ratify and observe ILO Convention 129: Labour Inspection (Agriculture).<sup>485</sup>
2. Introduce a simplified legal framework to support seasonal mobility of migrant labour, avoiding discrimination or fragmentation of regulation regarding migrant workers on the basis of 'regularisation'.
  - The Seasonal Workers Directive is a first step in the direction of a complementary legal framework for seasonal workers. However, it should be but a basis for the development of a comprehensive framework, especially since the migrant workforce in Greece includes a significant number of non-EU citizens (see below, under 4).
3. Facilitate access to residency rights.
  - Recognise time spent between employment contracts as a period of lawful temporary residence, provided the migrant in question is actively seeking work or proves she has the financial resources to sustain herself and comprehensive sickness insurance (cf. ['Citizens Right Directive' 2004/38/EC](#) with regards to EU citizens).
  - Link seasonal work permits and residency to work itself or to active and genuine job seeking rather than to a specific employer.<sup>486</sup>
4. Ensure measures are taken to improve the circular mobility of all migrant workers, irrespective of nationality, including those characterised as 'irregular,' between their country of origin and Greece, respecting their labour and human rights.
  - In the absence of pre-existing EU external relations agreements, Greece should seek to negotiate bilateral labour agreements with non-EU migrant origin countries, with due consideration to the welfare of migrant workers.
  - Representation of workers and the home and host local communities in such deliberations should be encouraged.
  - In order to ensure consistency of treatment, which will facilitate effective and full integration into the national labour market, it is suggested that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, rather than the Ministry of the Interior, should be responsible for the relevant legislative and policy initiatives, and for all administrative processes related to migrant workers.
5. The right to work, even on a temporary or seasonal basis, should grant migrant workers full access to national labour and social security law, without distinction on the basis of citizenship or nationality vis-à-vis Greek workers.
  - An oral agreement should suffice for the conclusion of an employment contract. However, a statutory obligation on the employer to issue the worker with a written statement of the basic terms and conditions agreed upon should also be introduced.
  - Labour law rights should also entail full access to collective labour law and its mechanisms as such (i.e. association, collective bargaining, and the right to collective action and strike).
6. Legislate to expressly allow migrant worker's engagement in co-operative schemes and their employment

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485 Specific guidance on the suggested relevant amendments and reforms to the national legal and administrative framework can be found in the [2018 ILO Assessment Report \(funded by the EU\)](#):

486 cf. Art.13 of Law 4251/2014 which maintains the dependency of seasonal work and the relevant processes upon specific employers.

in social and solidarity economy (SSE) structures and collectives.

- The formal recognition of SSE self-organisation<sup>487</sup> may facilitate bottom-up social integration. Civil society, including trade unions or other collective labour organisations, should be formally allowed to directly develop and fund or indirectly support SSE entities.
7. Link the power of authorities to determine regional 'capacity' for migrant work (i.e. the maximum number of seasonal workers to be employed in the area) with a positive obligation to provide adequate suitable housing (temporary or permanent) or assistance in securing suitable accommodation. Regional Development EU funds can be utilised for that purpose.
    - Improving social infrastructure and access to housing for migrants, as well as guaranteeing basic amenities at/near all settlements, remain a major priority for rural areas depending on agriculture especially in peak harvest season.
    - Social housing development powers should be restored to the Labour and Employment Office (OAED - Οργανισμός Απασχόλησης Εργατικού Δυναμικού), as successor to the Organisation for Worker Housing (OEK - Οργανισμός Εργατικής Κατοικίας), to facilitate local authorities in establishing suitable housing.<sup>488</sup>
    - Introduce tax incentives for landlords, complemented by rent control measures, and/or provide that part of the rent cost will be included in seasonal workers' gross salary and deducted at the source to encourage the provision of private accommodation.
  8. Guarantee that representatives of local communities (including, but not limited to, local municipalities and local district councils), trade unions, civil society organisations, the Labour Inspectorate and the Labour and Employment Office (OAED) are actively included in the formal consultation process to determine local 'capacity' for (seasonal) migrant workers (i.e. maximum number of invited migrant workers allowed).<sup>489</sup>
  9. Ensure transparency and accessibility of work permit, residency, and labour related processes, as well as of relevant training.
    - Information on training, social security, labour rights and processes, as well as job opportunities advertised on state outlets should also be provided in a second language (e.g. English).<sup>490</sup>
    - Expand the good practice of Migrant Integration Centres (MICs) by introducing a positive obligation on (all or selected, according to migrant worker numbers) local authorities to establish MICs.<sup>491</sup>
    - Stipulate that MICs should employ language tutors, translators, social workers and employment and migration law experts.
  10. Provide migrant and immigrant workers with appropriate documentation that proves their residency status and ensures that they are registered and eligible for health care and other social services.
    - Migrant and immigrant workers should be provided at minimum with social security (AMKA) and tax registry numbers (ΑΦΜ).

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487 also allowing the development and funding of relevant entities/units by civil society, including trade unions or other collective labour institutions.

488 The Organisation for Worker Housing ('OEK'), which had been the public institution enforced with developing social/public housing, was abolished in 2012 (Law 4046/12). As regards its management (but not development) competences, it was succeeded by the Labour and Employment Office (OAED).

489 Currently only prefecture authorities and employer representatives participate in relevant deliberations (see Art.11 § 2 Law 4251/2014).

490 The Labour and Employment Office (OAED) website, the main public portal for employment related information, currently only provides information in Greek.

491 Art.4 of Law 4368/2016 should be amended to that end. Currently the law merely 'allows' for MICs, leaving their establishment and operation to local authorities.



11. Extend access to the 'Minimum Guaranteed Income' scheme to seasonal and non-seasonal migrant and immigrant workers that are not permanent residents on a basis proportionate to their (temporary) residency.<sup>492</sup>
12. Support training and education opportunities for migrant workers.
  - The Agricultural University of Athens and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum have recently signed an agreement for the training and education of refugees and migrants.
13. Increase labour inspections and enhance the competences and resources of the Labour Inspectorate.
  - Access to workplaces, including farmlands, and worker housing complexes provided by employers or local authorities ought to be guaranteed.
  - Fund Labour inspectorates to allow:
    - efficient and comprehensive monitoring and intervention capability<sup>493</sup>
    - effective mediation and extra-judicial resolution of disputes regardless of possible language barriers
    - the pursuit of relevant research and the gathering of reliable data on migrant work and working conditions.
14. Give migrant and immigrant workers voting rights for local elections after a minimum period of residency.<sup>494</sup>
  - Establish representative committees for settlements or social housing complexes, to be included in local policy consultations.
  - Consider ratification of the [European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level](#) (1992).
15. Expressly recognise migrant and immigrant workers as among the beneficiaries and target groups of the social integration and access to public bodies and services objectives of the '[National Strategy for Social Integration and Poverty Reduction](#)' government action plan.<sup>495</sup>
16. Recognise dependent rights to residency and non-discrimination vis-à-vis nationals for close family members (spouse and dependent minors) of migrant workers.
  - Consider ratifying the [International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families](#) (1990).
17. Ensure that asylum seekers who wish to engage in seasonal work are regarded under the law as lawful seasonal workers and fall under the scope of the regular framework for (seasonal) migrant workers.

492 Currently the scheme is only open to 'foreigners' (sic) (Art.7 §5 Government Gazette (FEK) B 3359/28.7.2021) on the basis of permanent residency (Art.3 §3 Government Gazette (FEK) B 3359/28.7.2021). Criteria of a 'sufficient degree of integration' that could be used as condition for access to the scheme could be, inter alia, holding 'AMKA' and 'AΦM' numbers; payment of tax and social security contributions; enrolment of the individual in question or their descendants in public education; immediate family members residing in Greece, etc.

493 An example of mapping models and methods is found in I.Kougkoulos, M. Selim Cakir, and others, 'A Multi-Method Approach to Prioritize Locations of Labor Exploitation for Ground-Based Interventions' (2021) *Production and Operations Management* (online pre-publication) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/poms.13496>> (accessed: 18/11/2021).

494 (e.g. 6 months/year) and provided tax/social security contributions are paid in Greece.

495 The current version does not include them (page 44, May 2021).

## Care

Policy recommendations under 3, 5-6, 7-11, and 13-17 above with regards to agricultural and seasonal workers also apply with respect to care workers.

In addition, specifically with regards to care workers:

1. Ratify [ILO Convention No. 189 on Domestic Workers \(2011\)](#) and observe the minimum standards set by it.<sup>496</sup>
2. Increase funding and enhance the resources and operational capabilities of the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate (Σώμα Επιθεώρησης Εργασίας - Σ.ΕΠ.Ε./ Επιθεώρηση Εργασίας)<sup>497</sup> to ensure adequate and accurate mapping of the sector to counter the issue of invisibility of care workers and informal work.
  - Care work, particularly under live-in conditions, requires targeted research and data collection initiatives.
3. Ensure sectoral conditions and labour standards are set through collective bargaining.
  - Ensure that the legal effect of the outcome of representative sectoral consultation is then extended to all non-unionised care workers.
4. Formally recognise household tasks of a familial or housekeeping nature as part of live-in care work services to be work offered within the context of the employment relationship, and the time required for such tasks as working time.
5. Consider introducing comprehensive legislation to introduce minimum standards for care work (particularly for live-in care workers):
  - Including health and safety (which should include medical testing and access to vaccination rights, where appropriate), information rights, protection against harassment and abuse, rest, working time and standby periods.
  - Information rights should entail the obligation of employers to issue an accurate statement of the particulars (terms and conditions) of employment.<sup>498</sup>
  - In any case, regardless of the scope of care-work specific regulation, specific provisions should be introduced to ensure decent living conditions for live-in care workers that respect their privacy.
  - Such conditions include: a separate private room, access to suitable sanitary facilities, adequate lighting, heating and air-conditioning in keeping with the conditions of the household, and meals of appropriate quality and quantity.<sup>499</sup>
6. Ensure that migrant care workers are registered by employers and protected as such regardless of their status as documented or not.
7. Facilitate access to residency rights.
  - Recognise time spent between employment contracts as a period of lawful temporary residence, provided the migrant in question is actively seeking work or proves she has the financial resources to

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496 Particularly given the live-in working status of a substantive part of migrant care workers.

497 Art.102 ff. of the recently issued Law 4808/2021 provide the succession of the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate Corps (Σώμα Επιθεώρησης Εργασίας) by the Labour Inspectorate (Επιθεώρηση Εργασίας) independent public authority.

498 See para. 6 of the nonbinding ILO Domestic Workers Recommendations 2011 (No 201).

499 See para. 17 of the nonbinding ILO Domestic Workers Recommendations 2011 (No 201).

sustain herself and comprehensive sickness insurance (cf. the [Citizens Rights Directive 2004/38/EC](#) as regards EU citizens).

8. Allow migrant workers access to public care and health sector jobs, particularly by explicitly recognising time offering care services to private employers as work experience relevant to public sector recruitment.
9. Enable access to care work related training.
10. Take steps to ensure mutual recognition of relevant care-related, training, experience and qualifications with countries of origin, particularly with regards to non-EU states and professions or training/experience/qualifications excluded from the scope of Directive 2005/36 with regards to EU Member States.
  - Enhance the mutual cooperation with public authorities of origin countries, including embassies. Establish information and administrative access points for migrant workers and their families in Greek embassies abroad.
11. Improve information channels both for care workers and their clients (elderly/in need of care) and their families.<sup>500</sup>
  - Sufficient information about minimum labour standards and new developments in labour and social policy ought to be easily accessible to both groups and the general public.
  - Consider utilising the offices and online platforms of the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, the Labour Employment Office (OAED), and the local Community Centres (including MICs) for that purpose.
12. Public support for elderly care services needs to be improved and expanded so that there is more organised care in elderly care homes, rather than reliance on family-provided care and informally employed carers.
  - Support measures to include income support for family carers, health advice for specific illnesses, and more targeted care services addressed to elderly in their homes.
  - At the local level (local government/municipalities), more support is needed to organise care workers and cover the living expenses of those providing critical care services.

## SPAIN

### **Agriculture**

1. Increase labour inspections, in collaboration with the civil guard, to detect a range of labour legislation violations.
  - Temporary employment agencies, in particular, should be closely monitored.
2. Make written contracts with migrant workers, even short-term ones, mandatory.
  - The practice of verbal contracts for temporary jobs should be made illegal because they place workers in a situation of total defencelessness in the event of breach of contract by the employer.
3. Provide short-term welfare unemployment protection for temporary workers.
  - Longer term, integrate workers into the social security system, both in terms of employer contributions and benefits covered.

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<sup>500</sup> In addition to the legislative intervention on sectoral labour standards for the introduction of a formal right to information for workers.

4. Increase the transparency of the GECCO scheme.
  - Engage trade unions to ensure compliance with Spanish and European labour regulations, particularly in terms of equality and non-discrimination.
5. Create the role of an intercultural mediator in territorial administration.
  - To be independent of employers, have access to workplaces to mediate conflicts, inform and assist workers, and channel their complaints.
6. Spanish agricultural and labour authorities should unequivocally support the Commission and the European Parliament's proposal that direct European aid received by agricultural producers is conditional on compliance with the labour rights of seasonal workers.
7. Establish the legal requirement for local authorities and employers to provide adequate housing for seasonal workers travelling from other countries or from other locations within Spain.
8. Provide adequate public, health, social, and immigration services in agricultural areas receiving immigrants during the seasonal campaigns.
  - Invest in centres providing seasonal workers with information and advice, internet connection, and other basic services.
9. Provide immigrants' access to affordable rentals.
  - These should include tax incentives for landlords and municipal guarantees in the event of non-payment, as well as rent control.
10. Formulate long-term housing policy that reduces the development of inadequate housing settlements that have become a regular feature in some agricultural regions.
11. Provide settlements with basic amenities.
  - Provide their inhabitants with alternative housing and ensure that they are legally registered for health care and other social services.
  - Initiate regularisation for those inhabitants who are undocumented immigrants.
12. Simplify and further resource the administrative procedures for obtaining and renewing work permits.
13. Consider the implementation of extraordinary regularisation channels for undocumented migrant seasonal workers living in Spain.
  - This would avoid three years of precarious work, lack of protection, and social exclusion for migrants who arrive in Spain illegally. It would provide employers with abundant local and legal labour at the same time as improving migrants' living and working conditions.

## **Care**

1. Reform regulations and improve social protection for domestic workers
  - In particular, grant them the same right to unemployment benefits as given to employees in other sectors.
2. Differentiate care from domestic work in the Special Domestic Workers System.
  - This should be accompanied by specific measures aimed at domestic workers dedicated to care

including training, the professionalisation of the sector and its integration into the public system for Personal Autonomy and Assistance for Persons in Situations of Dependency (SAAD).

3. To enable a work-life balance and integration, remove legal barriers to family reunification of ascendants of care workers.
4. Adequate financing of SAAD.
5. Improve access to training and certification for domestic workers who are also care workers.
  - Reform the accreditation process, making it more affordable and streamlined to enable domestic workers to be registered in the public care system (SAAD) as home help assistants, personal assistants, or nursing home workers.
  - This would also improve the quality of the care services provided and give informal home care workers an occupational mobility pathway into more financially secure and regulated jobs in the formal care sector.

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# APPENDICES

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy (of the European Union)
CSO	Central Statistics Office (Ireland)
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ECTHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEA	European Economic Area
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSE	Health Service Executive
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JLC	Joint Labour Committee
MIC	Migrant Integration Centre (Greece)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SSE	Social and Solidarity Economy
TCN	Third Country National
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union



## Appendix 2: Key terms

- **Agri-food:** The economic sector encompassing activities connected with the production and processing of foodstuffs (including beverages), food-related agricultural products (excluding fish products), and non-edible agricultural product categories such as tobacco, skins and hides, cotton, and ornamental flowers.<sup>501</sup>
- **Irregular migration:** Migration that does not occur through recognised authorised channels. In this report, the term ‘irregular migrants’ (or ‘irregular migrant workers’) refers to migrant workers who do not have the legal right to stay in their host countries (i.e. ‘undocumented migrants’) and/or whose employment is not legally permitted by their host countries’ legal authorities. The act of removing these legal restrictions in respect of a specific migrant is known as ‘regularisation.’
- **Informal employment (or informal work):** Any employment relationship that is, in law or practice, not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, paid annual or sick leave, etc.) for reasons such as: non-declaration of the jobs or the employees; casual jobs or jobs of a limited short duration; jobs with hours of work or wages below a specified threshold (e.g. for social security contributions); employment by unincorporated enterprises or by persons in households; jobs where the employee’s place of work is outside the premises of the employer’s enterprise (e.g. outworkers without employment contract); or jobs, for which labour regulations are not applied, not enforced, or not complied with for any other reason.<sup>502</sup> For the purposes of this report, informal care employment can involve direct employment relationships between families and care workers, as well as between migrants and intermediary care agencies who implement informal employment arrangements.<sup>503</sup>
- **Care workers and domestic workers:** Any worker engaged in paid direct, personal and relational care activities, such as feeding a baby, minding young children, nursing an elderly person or providing physical assistance to persons with disabilities; and indirect care activities, such as cooking and cleaning. Care work therefore comprises a wide range of occupations, but this report focuses mainly on the subset of care workers who provide direct care services to older adults (‘elderly care’) and, to a lesser extent, to young children (‘childcare’). The term used here to describe a care worker employed in a household is ‘home care worker’ (or, if living in the care recipient’s home: ‘live-in care worker’). The term *domestic worker* is used here to describe the statistical category that some countries, including Greece and Spain, use to describe workers employed within households, including as home care workers, gardeners, cleaners, cooks or other home-based occupations.<sup>504</sup>

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501 For more details on the product categories included, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agrifood-explanatory-note\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agrifood-explanatory-note_en.pdf).

502 This definition is based on the definition set out in: Ralf Hussmanns, “Defining and measuring informal employment.” (International Labour Office, 2004). <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/download/papers/meas.pdf>.

503 It should be noted that not all home-based migrant care workers are informally employed. For example, migrants employed in outpatient care organisations can be tasked with visiting elderly care clients and delivering care services in the latter’s homes. See, for example, European Commission, “Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion,” Personal and household services - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1427&langId=en>.

504 For more detailed definitions of care and domestic work, see: International Labour Organization, “Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work” (Geneva, 2018), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_633135.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf).

## Appendix 3: Interview sample

### Ireland (n.21)

Conducted between September 2019 and May 2021.

- 2 trade union officials
- 4 leaders of migrant associations<sup>505</sup>
- 9 migrant association representatives
- 4 CSO representatives
- 2 migrant workers

### Germany (n.33)

Conducted between August 2019 and November 2020.

- 3 employers
- 4 trade union officials
- 8 employees of CSOs
- 6 leaders of migrant associations
- 3 council officials, 1 care sector expert, and 8 migrant care workers. Interviews were conducted between August 2019 and November 2020.

### Greece (n.22)

Conducted between June 2019 and August 2020.

- 3 local/national government representatives
- 4 employer representatives (2 farmers and 2 health sector officials)
- 1 trade union official
- 2 employees of CSOs
- 3 leaders of migrant associations
- 9 migrant workers.

### Spain (n.28)

Conducted between October 2019 and January 2021.

- 3 employers / employer representatives
- 4 trade union officials
- 11 CSO representatives
- 3 leaders of migrant associations
- 3 local council officials
- 9 migrant workers (2 in care sector, 7 in agricultural sector)

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<sup>505</sup> In all countries, members of migrant associations were in many cases migrants employed in the agricultural/care sector.

## Appendix 4: Interview codes<sup>506</sup>

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
<b>GERMANY</b>			
DE.1	BEMA	Labour Rights Counselling Service / Counsellor on Workers' Rights	Aug-19
DE.2	BEMA	Labour Rights Counselling Service / Counsellor on Workers' Rights	Aug-19 / Follow-Up: Oct-20
DE.3	AWO- Welcome Center	Migration Counselling / Social counsellor	Aug-19
DE.4	AWO- Welcome Center	Migration Counselling / Social counsellor and care worker (Polish)	Aug-19
DE.5	Ver.di Gewerkschaft	Trade Union / Responsible for migration topics within trade union	Sep-19
DE.6	Ver.di Gewerkschaft	Trade Union / Responsible of Care Sector within trade union	Sep-19
DE.7	Critical Workers	Migrants' grassroots organisation / Various members of the organisation	Sep-19
DE.8	Oficina Precaria	Migrants' grassroots organisation / Various members of the organisation	Sep-19
DE.9	[Anonymous]	Civil society organisation / Counsellor for migrants and refugees willing to work in the care sector	Oct-19
DE.10	Agency Z.	Company providing Outpatient Care / Company's owner and coordinator of care services	Oct-19
DE.11	Faire Mobilität	Labour Rights Counselling Service / Counsellor	Oct-19
DE.12	DGB (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund)	German Trade Union Confederation / Responsible of Department of labour market policy	Oct-19
DE.13	Ayekoo	Organisation working on migrants' labour market integration / Counsellor on labour integration for migrants	Oct-19
DE.14	Charitè	Hospital / Responsible of "Integrations management"	Nov-19
DE.15	VHS (Volkshochschule)	Public financed school for adult education, offers "integration courses" to migrants / Teacher	Nov-19
DE.16	Integration Officer (District of Pankow, Berlin)	Public Institution / Coordinator for "socio-spatial Integration"	Dec-19

<sup>506</sup> Interview information is presented differently for different countries within the sample based on anonymity and ethics considerations of local research teams.

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
DE.17	Integration Officer (District of Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Berlin)	Public Institution / Integration Officer	Jan-20
DE.18	Proyecto Tlayolan	Migrant Grassroot Organisation / Founder and member	May-20
DE.19	Linara Faircare	Private agency specialised in placement of "Live-in" care workers / Founder and owner	Sep-20
DE.20	Polnischer Sozialrat (Polish Social Council) Initiative polnischer Betreuer:innen	Migrant Association / Member of the board	Nov-20
DE.21	(Care workers initiative)	Migrant Grassroot organisation, polish care workers' collective / Founders and activists	Oct-20
DE.22	La Red	Migrant Association / Founder and member	Nov-20
DE.23	Berliner Stadtmission (Evangelische Kirche/ Protestant Church)	Project BENN / Coordinator of BENN project for District of Mitte, Berlin	May-20
DE.24	Faire Mobilität Kiel	Labour Rights Counselling Service / Counsellor	Nov-20
DE.25	PECO- Institut e.V.	Trade union-affiliated institution / Management Assistant	Nov-20
DE.26	Care Worker 1	Formal care sector	Aug-19
DE.27	Care Worker 2	Informal care sector	Sep-19
DE.28	Care Worker 3	Formal care sector	Sep-19
DE.29	Care Worker 4	Formal care sector	Sep-19
DE.30	Care Worker 6	Informal care sector	Oct-19
DE.31	Care Worker 7	Formal care sector	Oct-19
DE.32	Care Worker 8	Formal care sector	Nov-19

## GREECE

ML.1	Key informant	Representative of Local Government	Aug-20
ML.2	Key informant	Representative of Local Government	Aug-20
ML.3	Key informant	Health sector	Aug-20
ML.4	Key informant	GSSE (trade union)	Jul-20
ML.5	Migrant (from Bangladesh) and representative of a migrant association		Jul-20

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
ML.6	Migrant care worker (from Albania)		Sep-19
ML.7	Migrant care worker (from Albania)		Nov-19
ML.8	Migrant care workers (from Romania)		Feb-20
ML.9	Migrant (from Bangladesh) and association representative in rural area		Aug-20
ML.10	Migrant care worker (from Albania)		Jul-21
ML.11	Policy maker		Aug-20
ML.12	Migrant care worker (Albania)		May-20
ML.13	Agricultural migrant worker (Bangladesh)		Jun-19
ML.14	Key informant	Health sector	Jul-20
ML.15	Farmer		Jun-19
ML.16	Migrant care worker		Jul-20
ML.17	Migrant care worker (from Georgia)		Jul-20
ML.18	Migrant care worker (from Albania)		Aug-19
ML.19	Key informant	Migrant Integration Centre Western Greece / employee	Jun-19
ML.20	Farmer		Jun-19
ML.21	Migrant (from Sierra Leone) and representative of a migrant association		Sep-19
ML.22	Key informant	Migrant Integration Centre Western Greece / employee	Jun-19

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
<b>IRELAND</b>			
IE.1	Migrant from Nigeria	Echoes International (Christian Mission charity) / Lead Staff	Feb-21
IE.2	Migrant woman & employee	Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland (MASI)	Feb-21
IE.3	Employee	NASC (provide legal services and resources to migrants) / volunteer	Feb-21
IE.4	Brazilian migrant worker	Gort Resource Centre / helps take care of children at GRC	Apr-21
IE.5	Staff member	Gort Resource Centre / social worker	Mar-21
IE.6	Staff member	Migrant Rights Centre Ireland / Social enterprise and care coordinator	Oct-19
IE.7	Staff member	European Network Against Racism / Communication and Membership Development Officer	Oct-19
IE.8	Migrant workers from Brazil		Jun-20
IE.9	Member	Dublin City Coop	Nov-20
IE.10	Volunteer English Teacher	English language centre in Dublin	Jun-20
IE.11	Manager	English Language Centre	Apr-20
IE.12	Project worker	DCCC	Oct-20
IE.13	Project worker	New Communities Partnership (NCP, provides assistance and advocacy for migrants)	Oct-19
IE.14	Integration Officer	Immigration Council Ireland	Oct-21
IE.15	Programme managers	New Communities Partnerships	Feb-21
IE.16	Officer	Latin American Solidarity Centre	Jun-21
IE.17	Organiser for the food sector	Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)	2020
IE.18	Staff member	AKIDWA (Akina Dada wa Africa - a migrant women network)	Dec-21
IE.19	Anonymous	Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)	2020
IE.20	Academic	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Sep-19
IE.21	Two staff members	New Communities Partnership (NCP, provides assistance and advocacy for migrants)	2019 and 2020

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
<b>SPAIN</b>			
ES.1	Legal advisor	Legal and social service for immigrants of HUELVA ACOGE	Oct-19
ES.2	Social worker	FECONS (European Foundation for North-South Cooperation [Fundación europea para la cooperación norte-sur]) in Lepe (Huelva)	Oct-19
ES.3	Officer	Social services of the City Council of Lepe (Huelva)	Oct-19
ES.4	Officer	CEPAIM Foundation in Lepe (Huelva)	Nov-19
ES.5	Social worker	ASNUCI (Association of New Citizens for Interculturality [Asociación de Nuevos Ciudadanos por la Interculturalidad])	Nov-19
ES.6	Legal advice manager	Horticultural Agricultural Cooperative of Cartaya [Cooperativa Agraria Hortofrutícola de Carta-ya] (Huelva)	Feb-20
ES.7	Council employee	Local Development, Employment and Training at the City Council of Cartaya (Huelva)	Mar-20
ES.8	Municipal Employment Officer	City Council of Cartaya (Huelva)	Mar-20
ES.9	Social educator	Residence for seasonal immigrant workers of Tariquejo (Cartaya, Huelva)	Mar-20
ES.10	Group interview with a group of (6) immigrant agricultural workers residing in Lepe (Huelva): five Senegalese and one Gambian		Mar-20
ES.11	Social policy manager	CCOO [Comisiones Obreras] trade union office at Huelva	Mar-20
ES.12	Secretary General	CCOO [Comisiones Obreras] trade union office at Huelva	Mar-20
ES.13	Officer	ASAJA Huelva employers' association (Agricultural Association of Young Farmers [Asociación agraria de jóvenes agricultores])	Mar-20
ES.14	Former Mayor	Cartaya and president of the residence for seasonal immigrant workers of Tariquejo (Cartaya, Huelva)	Jul-20
ES.15	Gambian agricultural migrant worker from Cartaya (Huelva)		Jul-20
ES.16	President of ASNUCI	Association of New Citizens for Interculturality (Asociación de Nuevos Ciudadanos por la Inter-culturalidad)	Nov-20

Interview number	Category of interviewee / Organisational affiliation	Type of organisation / Role of Respondent	Month of Interview
ES.17	Staff member	Murcia Acoge (Migrants rights and solidarity organisation)	Nov-20
ES.18	Farm worker and activist	Huelva Day Laborers in Struggle [Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha]	Nov-20
ES.19	Secretary General of the Countryside Federation of the CCOO union	CCOO [Comisiones Obreras]	May-21
ES.20	President of the Malian Association of Lepe and member of the Association of African Workers of Lepe		Jun-21
ES.21	President of the Association of Domestic Workers Malen Etxea of Guipúzcoa		Jan-20
ES.22	Domestic worker and member of the Observatorio Jeanneth Beltrán de Derechos en Empleo de Hogar y de Cuidados		Sep-20
ES.23	Association member	Senda de Cuidados, Non-profit association specialized in elderly care	Sep-20
ES.24	Domestic worker and member of workers' collec-tive	Territorio Doméstico de Madrid (domestic workers' collective)	Sep-20
ES.25	Head of Oxfam's Domestic Programme	Oxfam	Oct-20
ES.26	Nun	Interlavapiés Network	Oct-20
ES.27	Member of the Interlavapiés Network and social educator in Madrid City Council		Jan-21
ES.28	Head of trade union Secretariat	Secretariat of Equality and Social Policy of the Federation of Construction and Services of the CCOO trade union's Madrid office	May-21



## Appendix 5: Topic guide

### Migrant key workers and social cohesion: How can we improve opportunities for political and social participation in host countries in Europe?

#### Topic Guide and guidance for researchers

We have proposed below a list of questions organised thematically that can be used to structure your discussion with individuals you interview for this project. The questions reflect the principal aspects of research outlined in the Concept Note. They are not intended to be used verbatim but rather to support consistency across the 4 national contexts and sectors. Therefore, while we would expect you to tailor the questions, we will all need to follow the same themes to achieve the project objectives.

#### Theme 1: Working Conditions and Rights

We are focusing on documented workers engaged in low-skill work. However, you should still ask about their legal status, and how it affects their rights to settlement and other employment.

- § What is the nature of migrants' work? What are migrants' working conditions?  
*(Do they receive the minimum wage? Do they receive time off? Can they change jobs? Do they have promotion/training opportunities? Can they join trade unions? Has austerity affected this?)*
- § What are the prior qualifications of the migrants in this workplace? Are their qualifications recognised by the employer?
- § Is their work isolating? *(e.g. are they concentrated in specific categories of agricultural/care work? Do they work alone, or alongside other migrants and/or 'the local population'?)*
- § Where do the migrants live? How did they find housing?
- § If migrants live together with the employer, do they get days off?
- § Where are their families?
- § Do migrants have access to legal support? Are migrants aware of their working/civic rights? *(e.g. from exploitative employers, discrimination, unfair treatment by state authorities)*
- § Do migrants have access to any benefits and to public services? Have they used public services? *(unemployment insurance, healthcare, pension)*
- § Do migrants face any further difficulties with their life here?
- § How do migrants see the connection between their working life and everyday living in their wider community?
- § Do migrants make use of any social support networks? *(e.g. diaspora networks, co-ethnic networks, local neighbourhood networks)?* If so, how do they use these networks?

## Theme 2: Opportunities for Engagement

§ Whom can migrants turn to for assistance when it comes to (a) language tuition, (b) interacting with public institutions and (c) securing working/civil rights?

§ What are the general attitudes of migrants (locals) towards (a) their “native” (migrant) work colleagues and (b) members of the local (migrant) community? Do these attitudes vary by migrant group?

§ Do employers take any steps to integrate migrant workers within the workplace? (*e.g. by desegregating the workplace, or organizing joint activities with other employees*)

§ What opportunities, if any, exist for migrants to participate in the civic and political life of their host communities? Do migrants take advantage of these opportunities? (*e.g. through participation in political parties, membership in social movements, volunteering, etc*)

§ What is the impact of migrants’ participation in civic and political activities on relations between migrants and members of the local community (a) at work (b) in residential settings (c) in local civic/political institutions?

§ Do migrants interact and form relationships with members of the local community? If so, where? (*e.g. local associations? At work?*)

## Theme 3: Obstacles to Engagement

§ What are the obstacles, if any, to migrants’ participation in the civic and political life of their communities?

§ How do migrant workers overcome individual isolation and/or isolation as a group? How does isolation affect their engagement with the host society?

§ How do migrant workers overcome isolation? How does this isolation affect engagement with the host society?

§ Are there any mechanisms for resolving disputes between migrants and employers / members of the local community?

§ What forms of prejudice do the workers face? How frequently?

§ How do these forms of prejudice affect migrants’ attitudinal, interactional and political participation patterns?

§ Are migrants’ attitudinal, interactional and political participation patterns affected by their conditions of work? How so?

## Theme 4: Recommendations for Policy and Direct Services

Although the questions in this thematic section pertain to policies targeted at migrants in low-skill jobs, you may also explore how policy changes could improve the conditions and social inclusion of migrants' co-residing family members.

How could (a) legislative bodies, (b) the national/local government, (c) employers, (d) trade unions and (e) civil society organisations do any of the following:

- § Improve the working conditions of migrant workers in the workplace and/or the agricultural/care sector in general;
- § Facilitate migrants' equitable access to welfare services and legal protections vis-à-vis employers and public authorities;
- § Promote positive attitudes towards migrants among members of the local community;
- § Encourage positive interactions and relationships between migrants and their host communities;
- § Promote migrant participation in community and civic-associational life;
- § Increase migrant participation in local and national politics.

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**AUTHORS,  
ABOUT FEPS &  
PARTNERS**

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



## DR. FLAMINIA BARTOLINI

Flaminia received her PhD in Sociology from Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. She currently works as an independent researcher.

Her doctoral thesis was published by Transcript with the title “Intimacy in illegality: Experiences, Struggles and Negotiations of Migrant Women”. Flaminia’s research focuses on critical migration studies, qualitative and feminist methodologies, feminist issues, gender and research ethics. Parallel to her academic activities, she has been working for several years at the intersection of research and practice in the field of migration, health and women’s empowerment.



## DR. SHANA COHEN

Shana Cohen is the Director of Think-tank for Action on Social Change (TASC).

She studied at Princeton University and at the University of California, Berkeley, where she received a PhD in Sociology. Her PhD analyzed the political and social consequences of market reform policies in Morocco for young, educated men and women. Since then, she has continued to conduct research on how economic policies have influenced political and social identity, particularly in relation to collective action and social activism.

She has taught at George Washington University, the University of Sheffield, and most recently, University of Cambridge, where she is still an Affiliated Lecturer and Associate Researcher. Her areas of teaching have included global social policy, globalization, and human services.

Before coming to TASC, Shana was Deputy Director of the Woolf Institute in Cambridge. In her role at the Institute, she became engaged with interfaith and intercultural relations in Europe, India, and the Middle East.

Beyond academic research, Shana has extensive experience working with NGOs and community-based organizations in a number of countries, including Morocco, the US, the UK, and India. This work has involved project design, management, and evaluation as well as advocacy. She has consulted for the World Bank, the Grameen Bank Foundation, and other private foundations and trusts.



### LOUKIA-MARIA FRATSEA

Loukia–Maria is a researcher at the Department of Geography of Harokopio University, Athens, Greece. She has studied agricultural economics and rural development and has specialised in migrant social and spatial mobilities across urban and rural areas. She seeks to combine social and geographical analysis in the study of migrants and migration movements. She has participated in 16 national and international research projects on migrant integration in local labour markets, rural development, refugees and integration policies, socio-spatial mobility of migrants, and migration policies and has published in Greek and international scientific journals and edited volumes. In 2021 she was elected to the Executive Committee of the European Sociological Association (ESA) for the term 2021-2023. Her research interests include rural transformation, migration and social change and social stratification and mobility.



### DR. GERRY MITCHELL (Editor)

Gerry is a social policy researcher, most recently having worked for Compass, FEPS, FES and TASC. Previously, a Research Officer in the Social Policy Department at the London School of Economics (LSE), with degrees from the University of Cambridge and LSE, she completed her PhD as an Associate at the LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. Her research interests include inequality, frontline experience of social policies and reform of political culture. Gerry is also involved in local politics as Chair of Woking Constituency Labour Party (standing as its parliamentary candidate in the 2019 General Election), and Surrey-wide Compass. She is currently co-writing a book on high income earners for Policy Press. Twitter: @GerryMitchell2



### LIRAN MORAV (Co-editor)

Liran Morav is a Doctoral Candidate at the Department of Sociology of the University of Cambridge. His research covers social capital, social cohesion, ethnicity and migration. Liran's doctoral research examines the integration of ethnic minorities in Europe, with particular emphasis on Jewish 'postcolonial' immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa.

Beyond his academic research, Liran was until recently an executive member of the Cambridge Migration Society (2016-2021), where he worked to promote discussion and awareness of migration-related issues through a variety of events and initiatives aimed at academics and the larger Cambridge public. Previously, he worked as a researcher at the Woolf Institute, an interfaith research institute based in Cambridge, UK (2013-14). He was also a political advisor to Israel's UN Mission in Vienna, Austria (2014-16). Twitter: @LiranMorav



### PROF. APOSTOLOS G. PAPAPOPOULOS

Apostolos studied sociology in Greece (B.Sc., Department of Sociology, Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences) and in the UK (M.Sc (Econ), Department of Sociology, London School of Economics and Political Science) and holds a PhD in Geography (University of Sussex). Currently, he is Director of the Institute of Social Research (EKKE) and Professor in the Department of Geography, Harokopio University. He has been Director of Postgraduate Studies of the M.Sc. programme titled: "Applied Geography and Spatial Planning" (2009-2011), Vice-Rector of Economic Affairs and Development (2011-2015), and Dean of the School of Environment, Geography and Applied Economics (2017-2018) in Harokopio University.

Apostolos has coordinated research projects as project leader, and also worked as a senior researcher in several research projects financed by the European Commission, the Greek State and other organizations. He has published numerous papers in international journals, in Greek academic journals, and in collected volumes and conference proceedings. He has edited or co-edited eight collected volumes (two of them were published by Ashgate Publishers in 1999 and 2010) and co-authored one book. His research has been published in Greek, English, Italian and Portuguese. His research interests include the following: social class and social mobility; rural transformations; rural development and policy; family farming; labour market and economic restructuring; migrant labour and integration; migration policy; mobilities and spatial justice; social impact of social research.

Apostolos has also been a member of the Working Group on Migration coordinated by the Greek Prime Minister's Office. He was appointed

as member of the Advisory Board (2017-2020) of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and for the last two-year period (2019-2020), he was elected Chair of this scientific advisory body. Currently, Apostolos is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Sociologia Ruralis* (2020-2024) and Associate Editor of the journal *NEW MEDIT: Mediterranean Journal of Economics, Agriculture and Environment*.



### MASON PARKER

Mason Parker is a Second Year Master of Public Policy Student at the Luskin School of Public Affairs at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was awarded the Global Public Affairs IPP Fellowship for his work with the Think-tank for Action on Social Change (TASC) and is a permanent resident of Ireland. Mason completed his B.A. in History from the University of California, Berkeley in 2018. Concurrently with finishing his Master's degree, he is currently the director of Alumni and Communications for the Global Public Affairs Program at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.

Prior to working with TASC, in 2016, Mason participated in a research study program focusing on minorities in Eastern Europe and wrote a photojournalism article that was featured in Berkeley's Institute of Slavic, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies Journal. His thesis for his B.A. in History focused on his home University, Berkeley, and how its International House represented an institution avant garde for the time. Currently, Mason is working alongside the Luskin School and the Milken Institute to write a report on public financing reform and housing inequality in California.



### JORGE SAN VICENTE FEDUCHI

Jorge San Vicente Feduchi is the deputy director of the Public Policy Laboratory at Fundación Alternativas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences (with a major in Political Science and International Relations) from Amsterdam University College and an MSc in Political Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. After completing his Master's degree, Jorge conducted academic research at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, in the fields of democracy theory, social movements and citizen participation. Between 2015 and 2019, he was also the editor-in-chief and Politics editor of the digital magazine *La Grieta*. More recently, he was a contributor to the report "Inequality and the top 10% in Europe", a pioneering two-year study conducted in four countries, which examines the financial position and attitudes towards inequality amongst the top 10% of income earners. Twitter: @jsanvicentef





### DR. FOTIS VERGIS

Fotis is Lecturer in Law at the University of Manchester Law School, where he teaches Labour Law and EU Law. Currently he is also the Programme Director for the LLB Law With Politics programme and the Course Director for Employment Law.

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Prior to joining Manchester, Fotis worked as a Teaching Associate at the University of Cambridge (Faculty of Law), where he also taught Constitutional, Labour and EU Law for various colleges. Before fully committing to academia he was a practicing barrister in Greece, working predominantly on labour law.

He is a member of the LLRN, the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS), the Industrial Law Society (ILS), the Academic Network on European Social Charter and Social Rights (RACSE/ANESC) and Hughes Hall College. He sits at the Editorial Board of the Greek Labour Law Review (ΕΕργΔ) and on the Scientific Committee of the 'Moving Labour Collective' (MLC), a community of academics and researchers working on labour law and related studies open to trade unionists and activists. He is also a (now non-practising) member of the Thessaloniki Bar.



### CARMEN VIZÁN

Carmen Vizán Rodríguez holds degrees in law and economics from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). She is a specialist advisor of the Research and Analysis Department of the Economic and Social Council of Spain. She has worked as a lecturer in political economy and public finance at the National University of Distance Learning (UNED) and at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), as well as in the public policy module of the Public Management Programme of the Fiscal Studies Institute (IEF). Carmen has collaborated with Fundación Alternativas in different research projects and publications.



### ARANTXA ZAGUIRRE ALTUNA

Arantxa Zaguirre Altuna has a Bachelor's degree in Law and a Master's degree in Migration and Intercommunity Relations from the Autonomous University of Madrid, where she specialised in migration policy and immigration legislation. A practising lawyer since 2000, she has been a member of the Legal Advice Service for Foreigners at the Madrid Bar Association and a member of the Legal Advice Service against Racism of the Madrid Bar Association in collaboration with the Madrid City Council. Since 2009 she has been working as an advisor and trainer with the domestic workers' collective Territorio Doméstico. In 2019 she published the article "Empleadas de hogar: Un caso evidente de discriminación indirecta" ("Domestic workers: a clear case of indirect discrimination") with Fundación Alternativas.

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES (FEPS)

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## ABOUT TASC

TASC is an independent think-tank whose mission is to address inequality and sustain democracy by translating analysis into action. TASC's Constitution presents its main objectives as: Promoting education for the public benefit; Encouraging a more participative and inclusive society; Promoting and publishing research for public benefit.



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Migrant workers are essential to the agricultural and care sectors in Europe. Informed by the concept of social cohesion, this report examines the lives of low-status migrant workers working in the agricultural and care sectors of Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain. It investigates their social rights, working conditions, and opportunities to participate in social and civic life. In addition, it analyses the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Drawing on interviews with migrant workers, civil society representatives, employers and local authorities, the report demonstrates how migrant workers are routinely subjected to exploitative working conditions, denied the basic social rights and protections afforded to local workers, and often live in inadequate and/or isolated housing. All of which undermine opportunities to participate in their host societies. Underlining the contributions of civil society organisations to migrant workers' inclusion, the report identifies an important limitation of current approaches to integration in the EU. In light of this, the report advances a range of EU and country-specific policy recommendations to further promote the social inclusion of migrants in EU member states.

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