



POLICY BRIEF #3

JANUARY 2025

BUILDING LOCAL RESILIENCE TO MIGRATION CRISES THROUGH CO-CREATION MECHANISMS

Key Points

Migration constitutes one of the main societal challenges in Europe and worldwide. **Managing social integration** could enable communities to adapt to demographic, economic, and cultural changes while reducing social tensions. Resilience capacity-building strategies and policies in this field require a multilevel and multistakeholder approach. This provides more informed, effective and just policies by giving voice to all interested parties, mobilising local actors and knowledge, and building collaboration with regional, national and international actors in the private, public and social spheres.

The findings from the **FutuResilience CHIOS Lab** lead to 4 main areas of policy action targeted at both locals and migrants:

- **Education**, to enhance social integration and mutual respect among diverse cultures.
- **Infrastructure**, to ensure access to all resources for decent working and living conditions.
- **Coordination** among different levels of governance, to promote subsidiarity in decision- and policy-making processes.
- **Media influence**, to secure the timely circulation of valid and unbiased information for all interested parties.





Introduction

The FutuResilience project aims to strengthen European economic and social resilience through an enhanced ability to quickly respond to future crises by employing innovative participatory methods, including co-creation, foresight and agent-based modelling. Crises caused by **large waves of migration** present intractable challenges from humanitarian, economic, social and environmental perspectives, to which local communities, including their new migrant residents, are called upon to engage and respond.

The policy brief aims to present findings from the CHIOS Lab, which explores how the Greek island of Chios experienced the 2015 migration crisis and what could be done to build community resilience. The lab builds on the **enormous impact of the migration influx**, which took place in the heart of the Greek economic crisis, straining resources and creating tensions within the local community, including concerns about integration, long-term housing, health, employment, economic impact, and social cohesion. This policy brief also outlines recommendations that are particularly crucial within a **global context of nested crises**, including economic crises, climate change, and conflicts, leading to the displacement of large populations.

Migration from the global to the local

Since the turn of the new century, migration crises have imposed considerable challenges on the lives of local communities worldwide. In Europe, **immigration continues to be one of the most prominent political issues**. In 2023, of the 448.8 million inhabitants in the European Union (EU), 27.3 million are non-EU citizens (6% of the total population of the EU). In 2022, 5.1 million people from non-EU countries migrated to an EU Member State (Eurostat, 2024).

According to the European Social Survey (ESS) (2016), although much of the public debate in Europe has focused on the **overall economic impact of migration**, the European public is more concerned with the consequences of migration for **increasing polarisation** within societies. Data from the EU Migrant Integration and Inclusion Dashboard shows that, within the EU, **labour market and social conditions** are worse for citizens of non-EU countries than for those of EU countries (see Figure 1: Migrant integration and inclusion in the EU). Research on migration has focused on opportunities and obstacles to the social integration of migrants and the critical role that synergies among private, public and social institutions can play in enhancing the community resilience of both local and migrant residents.

Migration, a global phenomenon

According to the United Nations' Agency of [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM), a migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his or her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person's legal status; intentions (voluntary or involuntary) and causes of movement; and the person's length of stay.

Notably, apart from socioeconomic costs and benefits, international migration has a human cost related to human rights violations. Although migration flows have been recorded throughout history, the scale of international migration has substantially increased in recent years with more than 280 million people living outside their country of origin.

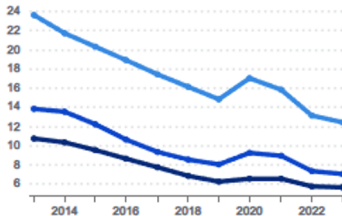




Unemployment

% of labour force | 15 to 74 years

- Citizens of a non-EU country
- Citizens of another EU country
- Nationals of the reporting country

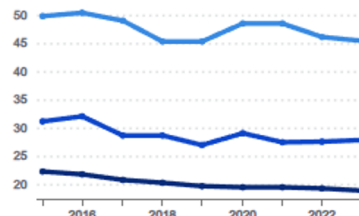


EU

Poverty or social exclusion

% of population | 18 years and over

- Citizens of a non-EU country
- Citizens of another EU country
- Nationals of the reporting country

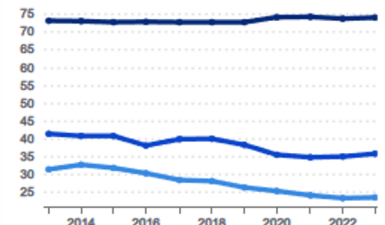


EU

Home ownership

% of population | 18 years and over

- Citizens of a non-EU country
- Citizens of another EU country
- Nationals of the reporting country



EU

Figure 1 Migrant integration and inclusion in the EU. Source: [EU Migrant Integration and Inclusion dashboard](#)

Chios is the fifth largest island in Greece with ca. 54,000 inhabitants. Along with the smaller Islands Psara, Antipsara and Oinousses, Chios constitutes one of the regional units of the North Aegean Region. This island has a rich natural and build environment, a large variety of agricultural products, including the famous Chios mastic, along with olive oil, figs, wine and citrus fruits. It also has a long tradition in shipping and ship-owners.

In 2015, Chios became a focal point for refugees fleeing war and persecution, arriving by sea from Türkiye. The island struggled to cope with the large number of migrants, leading to overcrowded camps, lacking adequate sanitary conditions. It is estimated that almost 120,800 immigrants arrived in 2015. According to the EU, by August 2016, "more than one million people seeking international protection, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, have entered Greece through Türkiye since January 2015." Greece, along with other countries such as Italy, received the most refugees. The number of arrivals by sea and land soared to very high levels.

This situation led to a humanitarian crisis that drew the attention of international and human rights organisations, the European Union, various governments, local authorities, nonprofit organisations (NGOs), the Church, and concerned citizens. This crisis compounded an already unstable political and social environment in Greece, which had been grappling with a socioeconomic crisis since 2008. The ongoing crisis increased the pressure on local communities to address these complex and multidimensional challenges. On the other hand, refugees faced numerous challenges related to living conditions and their need to move and settle in another country.



Exploring the migration crisis: examples from the Chios Lab

The **CHIOS Lab**, led by the Municipality of Chios and the Regional Development Institute (RDI) of Panteion University, aims at strengthening the governance of migration through an innovative participatory methodological approach. Furthermore, the lab looks to contribute to shaping European urban development policies by sharing successful practices and exploring synergies in a multilevel and multistakeholder environment.





The lab conducted workshops, focus groups, and interviews with multiple stakeholders, representing health, education, governance, local labour and entrepreneurial institutions, as well as an online questionnaire in the local language geared towards citizens. Through these activities, local actors were called upon to actively, openly, and collectively contribute to resilience capacity-building strategies by **sharing their experience** of the 2015 migration crisis, identifying determining factors, and shaping scenarios, strategies and policies to address such crises in the future.

Among the challenges encountered by the lab were **humanitarian crises**, the **distribution of resources**, public perceptions and **xenophobia**, the social **integration of migrants**, and concerns for the **security of community** members. Local stakeholders also highlighted interrelated challenges faced by islands such as Chios, including depopulation, brain drain, and low birth rates. The discussion also emphasised the importance of island communities achieving a **balance between self-sufficiency and engagement with the broader world**. Climate resilience and the role of agriculture in attracting populations were also identified as crucial elements for a sustainable future.

With respect to the refugee crisis, stakeholders acknowledged the **initial lack of preparedness** and proper **management tools**. The valuable role of NGOs in filling these gaps during the early stages of the crisis was recognised. The need for improved primary health care services, interpreters, and updated operational plans in refugee camps was also emphasised.

Furthermore, discussions with stakeholders have thus far revealed the importance of measures for **inhabiting scarcely populated and abandoned areas** with housing to ensure decent living conditions for migrants, especially during the summer months. These actions are coupled with initiatives for education to enhance the social integration and inclusiveness of multiple cultures and social groups. Migrants can benefit from **learning new languages, work skills, laws, and cultures of the host country**, while locals can also benefit from learning about different cultures, languages, and values; thus, both can support processes of dialogue, sharing, and cocreation for a new, diverse and inclusive society.

Finally, local stakeholders identified **six determinants of building societal resilience** in the face of migration: the global situation (e.g., climate change and military conflicts); access to work/education/health care for all community members; spatial planning and urban structure; multilevel decision-making; multiculturalism and interconnectedness; and the role of the media.



Policy implications and action items

The CHIOS Lab findings revealed that identifying challenges and building local resilience to migration could **strongly benefit from participatory and multistakeholder approaches**, representing all interested parties, activating local knowledge and dialogue, and enhancing collaboration.





These findings lead to concrete policy actions recommended to strengthen social integration for resilient communities at the local level:



- **Education** to enhance social integration and mutual respect among diverse cultures;
- **Infrastructure**, ensuring the supply of and access to all types of resources that promote decent working and living conditions;
- **Coordination** among distinct levels of governance at the local, regional, national, supranational and global levels to promote subsidiarity in decision- and policy-making processes;
- **Media influence** to secure the timely circulation of valid and unbiased information for all interested parties at the local, national and international levels.

Project Identity

Project Name	Creating FUTUre societal RESILIENCE through innovative, science-based co-creation labs [FUTURESILIENCE]
Consortium	[<i>Coordinator</i>] European Future Innovation Systems (EFIS) Centre – Belgium; NTNU Social Research – Norway; Fraunhofer ISI – Germany; University of Ferrara – Italy; University of Urbino – Italy; Maastricht University – Netherlands; Regional Development Institute – Greece; Polytechnic University of Cartagena – Spain; Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies – Denmark; Foresight Centre at the Riigikogu – Estonia; Mid-Sweden University – Sweden; Bulgarian Association of Personalised Medicine – Bulgaria; Municipality of Murcia – Spain; Municipality of Chios – Greece
Funding Scheme	Horizon Europe / HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01: An experimentation space for the uptake and use of R&I results for EU resilience and future preparedness
Website	www.futuresilience.eu
Duration	36 months (January 2023 – December 2025)
Budget	€2,889,406.25

Authors

- Asimina Christoforou and Yannis Psycharis (Regional Development Institute, Panteion University). Contributions from Evangelia Petridou and Jörgen Sparf (NTNU Social Research), Matias Barberis (EFIS Centre), and Regional Development Institute and Chios Lab team members.

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