

PRESS RELEASE
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Do the *human right* thing Seeking a new life - Seeking employment

An assessment of the employment situation of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece.

A new report by the [International Rescue Committee Hellas \(IRC Hellas\)](#), the [Greek Council for Refugees \(GCR\)](#) and the [Diotima Center](#), presents the barriers that beneficiaries and applicants for international protection face to access the labour market in Greece. The report was published in the context of the project "Do the *human right* thing - Raising our Voice for Refugee Rights", implemented under the [Active citizens fund programme](#).

Employment is a key factor for the integration of refugees into the receiving society. By law, asylum seekers in Greece have the right to access the labour market six months after filing an application for international protection. In practice, however, access to the labour market is characterised by challenges starting from the reception stage and continuing after the acquisition of international protection status, limiting capacity to exercise this right.

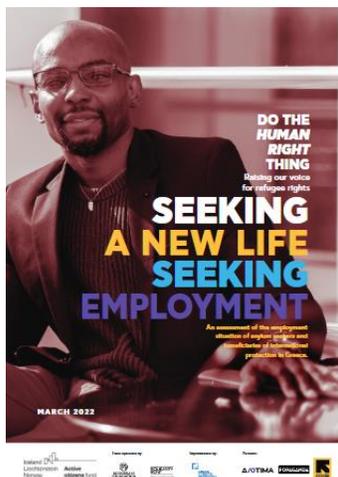
According to data from the survey conducted in the framework of the project, in which 183 beneficiaries and applicants for international protection participated up to the completion of the report, 72.6% stated that they do not work, while only 19.6% of those who work have a contract. 33.3% of those who work are refugees while 35.9% are asylum seekers.

The high unemployment rate in Greece, (13% in the third quarter of 2021 compared to the EU average of 6.2%), affects both the refugee and the local population. However, refugees and asylum seekers also face a number of additional challenges in accessing employment.

Indicatively, 54% of the respondents mentioned as the main obstacle to employment, the lack of knowledge of Greek and/or English, while 22.4% mentioned bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents (tax number, social security number). Out of the 183 questionnaire respondents, 75.4% has a tax number, 48% has a social security number and only 36% has been able to open a bank account.

At the same time, 18% report facing racism and discrimination by employers, while 18% consider the lack of a social network and connection to the Greek labour market as key obstacles to getting a job. According to the report, additional obstacles include the complicated procedures to have qualifications and skills recognised, but also to acquire new or enrich existing qualifications in Greece.

For refugees, access to the labour market is the means to regain their



“In Afghanistan, I did not work, I have not finished school. My family did not allow me to leave the house. Now that I am in Greece, I would like to work. It would be easier if my Greek was better. Also, it would be easier if I could start work at 9 in the morning, when my children are at school, because I don't have anyone to take care of them”

Farzana, refugee from Afghanistan*

**the name has changed*

autonomy and rebuild their lives in dignity and security. At the same time, inclusion in the labour market, as an integral part of integration, has multiple long-term benefits for the receiving society.

Based on their experience on the field and the research conducted, the International Rescue Committee, the Greek Council for Refugees and Diotima Centre recommend that Greece implements integration programmes at the reception stage and links national integration support programmes with the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, especially as regards collaboration with municipalities, regions and other stakeholders.

Read the report [here](#)

The project “Do the human right thing – Raising our Voice for Refugee Rights” is being implemented under the Active citizens fund in Greece by the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and Partner Organizations the Diotima Centre, the International Rescue Committee Hellas (IRC) and Popaganda..

The Active citizens fund in Greece is supported through a € 13.5 m grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway as part of the EEA Grants 2014 -2021. The programme aims to develop the sustainability and capacity of the civil society sector in Greece, and to strengthen its role in promoting and safeguarding democratic procedures, active citizenship, and human rights. The Fund Operator for the Active citizens fund in Greece is Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow. More information: www.activecitizensfund.gr/en/

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the EEA Financial Mechanism or the Fund Operator of the Active citizens fund program in Greece (Bodossaki Foundation in consortium with SolidarityNow).

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