REInSER

Refugees' Economic Integration through Social Entrepreneurship

Comparative STA Report on the assessment of societal change in the partners' state

Deliverable T1.1.2

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REInSER brings together eight partners from academia, business support organizations and local authorities gathering different expertise, knowledge and skills in six countries of the ADRION area, namely: Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. This strategic partnership strives to find a sustainable solution for the pressing issue of refugees and asylum seekers. The main objective of REInSER is to improve their economic, and consequently wider integration process in host societies of the ADRION programme area by using approaches of social economy and in particular social entrepreneurship. Information on the project REInSER can be found here: https://reinser.adrioninterreg.eu/.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction to the Deliverable

This deliverable is part of the project "REInSER – Refugees' Economic Integration through Social Entrepreneurship" and provides a comparative analysis of the dynamics of societal changes that have affected the ADRION area in the last decade. In particular, the research team has tackled the issue of exploring change at the societal level by looking in depth at migration, socio-demographic and economic indicators. Data, tables, graphs and maps related to the three sets of indicators will be presented in this Report. To be even more responsive to the latest developments, the best example of which being the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the research team was engaged in carrying out interviews with relevant actors with expertise regarding the migration, social and entrepreneurial contexts of each participating country.

The period of time mentioned above includes both *predictable* trends – take for example ageing or unequal economic performances between and within countries – yet also *unexpected* developments, such as the mass migration flows peaking in the period 2015-2017, which transited across the two main entry Routes to the ADRION area: the Mediterranean and the Balkan Route (we have described the context of these flows, also at the policy level, in the first project deliverable: the Analytical Tool, that will be soon available on the project website: https://reinser.adrioninterreg.eu/).

While the response to the migration challenge at the EU and ADRION level has been somewhat chaotic and framed within security and emergency understandings of the unfolding events, long-term strategies and instruments for integration are increasingly needed to cope with our changing societies. This assessment is not only based on the recent inflow of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the ADRION countries, but is also motivated by endogenous dynamics that are "typical" across most ADRION countries and sub-country territories, as we will show in this Comparative Report.

Against this backdrop, REInSER has among its main aims that of enhancing the possibilities for refugees to become active economic actors and agents of their own integration, and to contribute to the local and regional sustainable economic development by generating employment and supporting the creation of new socially responsible businesses. At the same time, this approach can offer a timely response to the socio-demographic and economic challenges in the region, such as aging and gaps in the labour markets, which will be described in this report.

In other words, the project conceives at its very core challenges as being interlinked, and will propose accordingly strategies that are beneficial for the ADRION (changing) territories and societies at large, in an inclusive manner.

In order to be able to formulate such integration strategies and instruments centred around social entrepreneurship, the REInSER team has found relevant to first gather data on societal trends and dynamics in the ADRION area. Knowing such information is in fact crucial to elaborate ideas and recommendations that are in line with present –

and future – needs of the territorial contexts involved in the project, and to bring forward a long-term perspective. For this purpose, the partners involved in the project were given the task to compile a National Report (Deliverable T1.1.1) composed of both data (collected at various sources) and qualitative information to be gathered via interviews and desk research.

The resulting picture emerging from the comparison of such information is of ADRION as an area characterized by common societal developments and challenges, which call for more cooperation and initiatives. Especially so, if a common future in the EU is projected on the region. In fact, ADRION covers four EU countries (Croatia, Greece, Italy[1] and Slovenia), three EU candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia) and one potential EU candidate country (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Diversities do exist, and will be reported here, yet we believe that are especially commonalities to be often overlooked. A set of policy recommendations, the result of the analysis carried out by the team across the ADRION countries, is offered at the end of this document.

The information collected in this Report represent also a useful backbone for the future activities of the project REInSER. The team is in fact also involved in surveying existing practices to select a body of best practices (including services and tools) in the programme area and beyond regarding social entrepreneurship and social economy. This scouting activity will get the project partners ready to launch later on six pilot actions, one in each participating country. Through these pilot actions, which will involve asylum seekers and refugees, the team will have the possibility to test and finalize innovative approaches. In this context, the comparisons carried out in this Report are helpful to be aware of commonalities and diversities in trends, policies, practices: this awareness will improve the implementation as well as the interpretation of the findings of the future activities envisaged in this project, in the light of territorial, cultural variables existing in the participating countries.

The impact of Covid-19 in the countries and territories of the ADRION programme area

The ADRION area contains at once elements of integration and disunion, opportunities and obstacles to cooperation, which are for most part rooted in the recent, traumatic past of the Balkan area. From the point of view of EU integration, Slovenia and Croatia have joined as Member States in 2004 and 2013 respectively, while accession for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the other countries in the region is still ongoing, under a stiff negotiation process.[2] Initiatives such as the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region and the Interreg programme have meanwhile emphasized the need for concerted, transnational

[1] As for Italy, it is important to mention that the ADRION programme involves 12 regions and 2 provinces and thus not the whole country, which is instead the case for all other participating countries.
[2] In the region, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are EU potential candidate countries. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are EU candidate countries.

development beyond national borders, creating through their activities a tangible perspective of a shared macro-space. At the same time, most of the area endures still the consequences of the war in the 1990s: to mention but one, there are still more than 300,000 Internal Displaced People (IDPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and an equally consistent number of refugees in the whole area, with a number of challenges attached to that, such as housing, labour access, and ultimately their return home.

In this framework, addressing societal changes requires paying attention to both opportunities and obstacles existing in the area. The scenario was possibly made more complex by migration flows and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which have affected all countries in the ADRION Programme area.

The pandemic has, indeed, hit all the area with similar consequences both for the local and refugee population. Specifically, it seems that in all the area the preventing measure against Covid-19 and the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic have particularly affected the refugee population. Indeed, the fear that the movement and reception of refugees may have boosted the spread of the virus pushed national and local authorities to adopt stricter measures when it came to its containment in reception centers. This aspect, together with the consequences of the border closure and the general increase of the border violence, has generated concerns regarding the protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, the severe socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, especially evident in the loss of jobs, has particularly affected vulnerable groups in the whole region, including refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs.

Let us now briefly explore each state context.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**, the short-term socio-economic impact of the pandemic is very noticeable. Every person is affected, no sector is immune to it, while its consequences simultaneously contribute to greater inequalities in society, jeopardizing decades of social and economic progress, especially for the most vulnerable categories.[3] The World Health Organization's Deficiency Analysis and Recommendations highlights the lack of a general strategic plan and coordination among health / crisis management institutions, inadequate crisis management skills, incomplete coordination between public and private health care institutions, and case management challenges, general staff shortages (epidemiologists, infectious disease specialists, microbiologists) and adequate expertise, including the lack of common databases and the issuance of clear, coordinated guidelines for the most basic services, such as primary health care services and state border control.[4] According to Nicola Bay[5],

[3] Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina by UNDP, (2020, p. 3).
[4] Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina by UNDP, (2020, p. 9).
[5] Interview taken by Radio Slobodna Evropa - https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/korone-u-migrantskim-kampovima-ni%C5%A1ta-vi%C5%A1e-nego-ina%C4%8De-u-bih/31171094.html.

Director of Danish Refugee Council BiH, testing for Covid-19 is an integral part of the medical care available to people on the move, as well as treatment within the temporary centre and under medical supervision. In the case of a more complex clinical picture migrants and refugees have the opportunity to be treated in health facilities, in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and local health workers, while the level of medical treatment is equal to that provided to the local population.

In **Italy**, Covid-19 surely had an important impact not only on the national health system, but also on the management of the immigration flows and on the protection of refugees. It is possible to divide the consequences of the pandemic on migration in three main groups:

1. the impact on the immigration flows and on the new arrivals;
2. the health and economic consequences of Covid-19 on refugees and immigrants already present in the country;
3. and its impact on the policies and legislations addressing these groups.

Regarding the new arrivals, while the pandemic has resulted in a consistent drop of regular and seasonal immigrants, the impact on the arrival of refugees by sea has not been so evident. Indeed, while the first months of the pandemic, March and April 2020, have witnessed a decrease of the arrival also by sea, especially from Tunisia, in the summer this flow has returned to increase. The figure of arrivals was comparable to the one of the previous years, although still far from the ones recorded in the summers 2016 and 2017.[6] Nevertheless, the total asylum applications have decreased, also quite consistently. This aspect, as also noted by the ISMU Foundation,[7] highlights how only a small part of asylum seekers arrive to Italy by sea, while the majority use other means of transportation that have been more affected by the pandemic. Concerning the impact of Covid-19 on refugees in Italy, it does not seem that the pandemic has spread more among refugees and immigrants in general, as it was feared.[8] This despite the fact that, as noted by an officer working on these issues in Brindisi,[9] the impossibility of keeping physical distance in the reception centres has surely created some issues in this regard. It is, nevertheless, very possible that Covid-19 had a major impact on these groups at the economic level, because of their higher vulnerability in this sense and of the higher share occupying positions in the precarious or irregular job market. In this context, as well, though, it is still not clear the real impact.[10] The same officer in Brindisi has noted how, in the last couple of years, the number of asylum seekers suffering from mental and psychological issues has increased. The imposed isolation at

[6] Matteo Villa, 'Fact Checking: migrazioni (e Covid-19)', Text, ISPI, 23 July 2020, https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/fact-checking-migrazioni-e-covid-19-27058.
[7] Fondazione Ismu, 'Ventiseiesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2020', 2020, p. 79.
[8] Fondazione Ismu, 'Ventiseiesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2020', 2020, p. 79.
[9] Municipality of Brindisi, technical assistance, interview, 31/05/21.
[10] Fondazione Ismu, 'Ventiseiesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2020', 2020.

the country level due to the pandemic may have contributed to this problem, although it is also possible that the violence and traumas suffered during the trip may have played a major role in this sense. Finally, the pandemic had an impact also on the policies and legislations adopted in the last year on immigration and integration. Indeed, if it is true that Covid-19 has overshadowed other issues in the public debate, such as immigration, it is also true that its consequences have made more evident the dependency of Italian economy on foreigner workforce and has obliged the authorities to take measures apt to contain the virus and, therefore, the movement of people. The lack of regular seasonal migration, due to the pandemic, has threatened a series of economic activities, mostly in agriculture and tourism, that depend on this kind of workforce. This issue has pushed the government to adopt measures aimed at regularising irregular immigrants already present on the territory, in order to avoid the growth of those working in the invisibility of the black market.[11] Furthermore, as highlighted by the Emilia-Romagna Region's officer, the necessity of avoiding further internal and external movements of asylum seekers pushed the authorities to automatically renovate all the residence permits released before the pandemic.[12] Finally, the necessity of avoiding the further spread of Covid-19 in the country, while reassuring the public opinion on this matter, has pushed the local authorities to apply particularly strict preventive measures to new arrivals, including the obligation of spending 14 days on "quarantine ships", immediately after disembarking to Italian coasts.

In **Serbia**, two contagion peaks of Covid-19 outbreak were recorded in April 2020 and July 2020. State of emergency in Serbia was introduced on 15th March and lifted on 7th May. According to Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Impact of Covid-19 on migrations and mobility in Serbia conducted by International Organization for Migration, during the pandemic migrants in Serbia have enjoyed non-discriminatory access to healthcare. Since the beginning of the pandemic only four cases have tested positive for Covid-19 among the migrant population, and they have all successfully recovered. As in other countries, migration management measures were focused on movement restrictions and quarantine. Registration of asylum seekers and intake of new asylum applications was discontinued during the State of emergency and provision of all state administration services extended in person suspended. Access to information on Covid-19 risks and public health prevention measures was provided, including PPE in centres. At the time of Covid-19 outbreak, 5,912 migrants were accommodated in 17 centres and with the increase of number of migrants, accommodation capacities were extended and adjusted to provide care for additional 3,000 persons. Migrants were quarantined in centres which affected their well-being, marking the need for increased psychosocial support. At the same time migrants have shown high degree of readiness to participate in the Covid-19 response in line with their opportunities, demonstrating an example of solidarity that should be utilized to counteract increased xenophobia in society and

[11] Fondazione Ismu, 'Ventiseiesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2020', 2020.
[12] Region Emilia-Romagna, Services for Social Policies and Immigration, online interview, 01/06/2021.

prejudice against migrants. After analysing the state response, the report highlights impact of the Covid-19 on education of migrant children, loss of income and housing for vulnerable migrants – IDPs, refugees from former Yugoslavia, returnees under the Readmission agreement. Although Serbia has taken important steps to provide inclusive education for migrants, notable problems remain when it comes to online schooling of vulnerable groups and education efforts need to be reinvigorated in the face of Covid-19. Loss of employment and income of different vulnerable migrant groups are prominent, as well as problems in access to housing. 21,000 IDPs were unable to earn income or have lost their jobs during the pandemic as well as 4,000 refugees from former Yugoslavia. Several challenges in social protection sector are identified: from existing cuts in social assistance and programmes targeting vulnerable migrants, to stretched capacities of those providing social assistance and loss of human resources working to ensure service delivery. Remittances to Serbia in 2020 declined for 19% compared to the first six months in 2019. Two main health system challenges have been recognized in Serbia during Covid-19 pandemic: the sufficiency of the public health system to identify, isolate, test and treat all cases of Covid-19 that emerge, and to trace and quarantine applicable contacts of the infected and the capacity of Serbia's healthcare system to dual-track its efforts and provide regular health services while at the same time aggressively treating and addressing Covid-19 as an overarching national crisis. During the State of Emergency, in order to reduce the number of people in contact with healthcare facilities and hence, reduce the risk of transmission among patients and healthcare workers alike, all non-essential health procedures (including diagnostic or treatment, as well as elective surgeries), were temporarily suspended. After the State of Emergency was lifted on 6th May, 2020, health institutions gradually re-established their provision of regular health services and this practice has been maintained during the second peak of increased virus transmission. A number of temporary hospitals were put in function addressing the needs of less severe cases of Covid-19, while several new hospitals were also constructed. Moreover, the capacity of PCR testing was significantly improved by two new high capacity laboratories. With the development of a wide range of Covid-19 vaccines, countries large and small have been accelerating their vaccination efforts. Serbia launched its campaign on 19th January and has since positioned high globally and in Europe for the share of population that has received at least one dose, reaching nearly one third of its citizens. Furthermore, the launch of the local production of the Sputnik V vaccine in Serbia by the Torlak Institute is anticipated in June, with estimated production capacity of 4 million doses in the first phase.

In **Croatia**, refugees and asylum seekers have access to non-discriminatory health services, but, at the same time, the lack of any special provision aimed at protecting vulnerable groups in this situation is object of concern for the UNHCR[13]. According to

[13] Zaštita izbjeglica I ranjivih skupina migranata - Priručnik za edukatore; Doc. dr. sc. Goranka Lalić Novak Doc. dr. sc. Radojka Kraljević; ISBN 978-953-7537-21-0.

the Ministry of the Interior (MUP), shelters for asylum seekers remain peaceful and safe, while borders are partially or completely closed in more than 120 countries, which is completely understandable response from a health point of view. Nevertheless, border closure represents also a threat for the protection of refugee human rights, especially in relation to their right to ask for asylum. The main concern, in this sense, is that special measures passed to face the Covid-19 crisis may remain in force for a long period of time. In this context, violations of fundamental rights of migrants are increasing, as well as cases of unnecessary and disproportionate detention, sexual violence, discriminatory restrictions. These, together with other measures that especially affect vulnerable groups, such as school closures, are particularly endangering those in need of international protection. In regard to the procedures provided for migrants suspected of being infected with Covid-19 in Croatia, all persons arriving at the centres, on the recommendation of a general practitioner, are accommodated in self-isolation and remain under medical supervision.[14]

Since Covid-19 was announced in **Slovenia** in March 2020, several measures have been adopted at state level to prevent further spread of the virus. In June and July interviews were conducted with refugees and asylum seekers by Peace Institute[15] to determine how these measures have influenced their lives.
Interviewees were asked how Covid-19 situation influenced their employment, their income or their financial situation. Majority of them (34) said there were no changes for them, since they were not employed and were receiving social welfare, and 5 of them said they were still working as usual (working in fast food restaurants, which were delivering food also during the quarantine). One person was waiting at home for work to continue (and were receiving lower income in this period), 2 self-employed persons were waiting at home for work to continue and for this period they received a "government support" in the amount of a minimum wage and they could stop paying their social contributions for 2 and a half months. One self-employed person said he was working from home, and 2 people lost their jobs after the pandemic was declared. Among 45 interviewed 33 of them said there were no changes in their financial situation, 4 people said they were receiving the same income as before, and 7 people said their income lowered during the pandemic (between 20% and 50% less). One person said he was about to sign working contract but due to Covid-19 it was canceled.
The majority of interviewed people (25) said they received the information regarding Covid-19 and preventive measures on time and also in a language they understood (English, Arabic, Persian for example) through the Government Office for the Support and Integration. 14 people said they received at least some information but not in their

[14] https://www.hpc.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UTJECAJ-%C5%A0IRENJA-BOLESTI-COVID-19-NA-MIGRACIJSKU-POLITIKU-izvje%C5%A1taj-o-pra%C4%87enju.pdf.
[15] https://www.mirovni-institut.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/the-covid19-influence-on-refugees-in-Slovenia-report.pdf.

language, and 6 of them said they did not receive enough information. Majority of interviewees said they would especially need more information about the changed medical system because they felt lost. Luckily, none of the 45 interviewed persons needed any urgent medical care during the epidemic, however 4 of them did not have access to Covid-19 test when they suspected they might be infected, and several people said their appointments (especially dentist's appointments) were cancelled. Around one third of interviewed people said they had no major issues during the quarantine.

The Ministry of Health published a Decree[16] on 20th March 2020 on temporary measures in health services due to the need for containment and control of Covid-19 epidemic. The decree introduced the following measures:

1. Put an immediate hold on all preventative measures and programmes;
2. Put a hold on all outpatient visits and appointments with exception of those marked as urgent or very urgent, oncological services of all types and monitoring of pregnancy and delivery;
3. Put a hold on all dental services.

The exceptions to the above were emergencies that are life-threatening, both medical and surgical. These are managed in the so-called "white areas" of hospitals (as opposed to red or hot areas where Covid-19 is managed).

On 7th April 2020, the Ministry of Health issued a modification of the decree where the following services were exempted additionally (on the condition that all recommendations as published at the homepage of National Institute of Public Health - NIJZ are respected when managing patients):

1. All procedures, which if not provided could cause a significant worsening of the person's health condition;
2. Essential prior medical check-ups before employment;
3. Health services for firemen in active service.

There has been an awareness of the need to support vulnerable people with long-term care needs and to discharge to social care but there has been very little support in place. The President of the Government called upon healthy young people, especially students, to volunteer in helping the elderly, and mayors to organise such supportive services. There has been a widespread impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on the delivery of health care services.[17] Data on the first seven months of 2020 show that the number of GP consultations decreased by more than 30% and the number of hospital discharges decreased. From September through the beginning of October, special expert teams nominated by the Minister of Health were to prepare a number of measures to optimize

[16] Odlok o začasnih ukrepih na področju zdravstvene dejavnosti zaradi zajezitve in obvladovanja epidemije COVID-19, Official gazette of Republic of Slovenia n.40/2020, See:https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2020-01-0708/odlok-o-zacasnih-ukrepih-na-podrocju-zdravstvene-dejavnosti-zaradi-zajezitve-in-obvladovanja-epidemije-covid-19.

[17]https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/countries/slovenia/livinghit.aspx?Section=3.2%20Managing%20cases&Type=Chapter#48Planningservices.

access to health services in Slovenia, with one objective being to utilize services of private providers in dealing with surge capacities in times of pandemics/crisis.
As of January 2021, Slovenia has begun to introduce the Covid-19 vaccination, with the Government preparing a timeline and identifying priority populations for receiving the vaccination. The Government decided to launch a campaign through the e-government website to express interest in vaccination, but it has not been fully operationalised. Vaccination has been implemented through to the primary health and public health systems by facilitating booking of appointments for vaccination.

In **Greece**, the response of the state towards the Covid-19 pandemic was at an early stage. The first Covid-19 case was reported in 27th February and a series of measures were taken that escalated during March until the 23rd March when a total lockdown was announced by the prime minister that lasted until the beginning of May. That initial response seemed to succeed containing the spread of the virus. However, by the end of August the number of infections started to rise leading to subsequent measures that yet again escalated to a 2nd lockdown that with small intervals lasted until the beginning of May 2021.
The refugee camps were considered an important factor in the spreading of the virus and a potential threat to the public, therefore on 17th March the government announced a list of protective actions in order to limit contamination within and outside the camps. Specifically, entrance to the camps was allowed only to employees and all other visitors were banned for fourteen days. Movement in and out of the camp was limited to one person and only for grave causes. Also, special isolation areas were organized in every Reception and Identification Centre.[18] As an Amnesty International report pointed out, in many facilities, these measures were repeatedly and discriminatorily renewed throughout the year. The overcrowded camps in Lesvos and Samos, among other locations, registered Covid-19 outbreaks and individuals were placed under quarantines. The inadequate living conditions prevented the implementation of quarantines with full respect of people's basic rights.[19]
From as early as April 2020 a series of Covid-19 outbreaks in refugee camps were identified which continued during 2020 and well into 2021. Information dating on mid-January 2021 have registered 1,240 Covid-19 cases in refugee camps that at the time accounted for 0,8% of the total number of Covid-19 in Greece.[20] In each of these outbreaks, refugee camps were quarantined with the entrance and exit to them being

[18] Kousi T., Mitsi L. & Simos J. (2021). The Early Stage of COVID-19 Outbreak in Greece: A Review of the National Response and the Socioeconomic Impact. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 322.
[19] Amnesty International Report 2020/21. https://www.amnesty.gr/sites/default/files/202021-air-english_2021-04-01_embargo_zz.pdf . Access 22 May 2021.
[20] Covid-19 Response Greece. (2021) https://camps.covid19response.gr/ Access 22 May 2021.

controlled by the police. In many cases, these incidents created friction among NGOs, local authorities and UNHCR bringing out a lack of cooperation among the key players.[21] In this situation, the Moria camp in the island of Lesvos became a case in point. Médecins sans Frontière (MSF) has highlighted that in parts of the Moria camp in Greece, outside the formal reception centre, there was one tap (and no soap) for every 1,300 migrants and people were living among rubbish with poor or no sewage systems. The numbers of showers and toilets were well below the recommended minimum standards for an emergency setting, with up to 5,000 people currently without any access to water, showers, toilets, or electricity.[22] Thus, the outbreak highlighted a principal limitation, the limited healthcare services available to the refugee population currently living in Greece. Scientists have expressed concerns, regarding the threats that the living conditions in the overcrowded camps pose for the health of the hosted populations.[23]

The limitations of the Greek health system seemed to be the major incentive behind the extended restriction measures. These limitations were the result of a decade long austerity measures that started in 2010, in response to the global financial crisis that started in 2008. Public spending was slashed by 32 percent across sectors, with public health expenditure falling by nearly 43 percent between 2009 and 2017. Structural reforms shifted a greater portion of health care costs onto patients. Furthermore, the three financial assistance programmes concluded with Greece's creditors included conditionalities, some of which encouraged, or influenced, the austerity measures that resulted in a debilitated health system.[24] Many of the challenges faced by health workers, during the period of austerity have been exacerbated during the pandemic, raising serious concerns about their health, safety, and working conditions. As it was pointed out by Amnesty International, health workers faced difficulties due to low staff numbers, lack of adequate personal protective equipment, and lack of adequate medical equipment including ventilators and ICU beds. Whilst economic crisis and austerity measures particularly and disproportionately impacted some groups before the pandemic, their health and livelihood are at particular risk since the arrival of Covid-19.

As far as the vaccination of the refugees is concerned, the minister of Asylum publicly declared in mid-February that the refugee population would be vaccinated following the same protocol as the general population.[25] However, by early May news reports

[21] UNHCR (2020). Greece: Update on COVID-19 response and other acute needs. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75314.

[22] Médecins sans Frontières. (2020). Covid-19: Evacuation of squalid Greek camps more urgent than ever in light of coronavirus pandemic. https://www.msf.org.uk/article/covid-19-evacuation-squalid-greek-camps-more-urgent-ever-light-coronavirus-pandemic. Accessed 19 May 2021.

[23] Kousi et al., 2021, op. cit.

[24] Amnesty International Report (2020/21), op. cit.

[25] Iefimerida: https://www.iefimerida.gr/politiki/mitarakis-metanastes-emboliastoyn-koronoioy.

mentioned that the only development was a preliminary survey by the Ministry of health among the refugees living in camps in order to register the intentions of refugees on vaccination. The reports mention that only a 40% of the population answered positively to the prospect of vaccination. Furthermore, as social security number is necessary for anyone in order to be vaccinated, refugees or asylum seekers that do not have one (either permanent – AMKA or temporary – PAAYPA) cannot be vaccinated.[26]

Methodological notes and data presentation

Before illustrating the main contents and findings of the project activities, this section provides clarifications on the methodology followed by the team in collecting and organizing data. Each partner participating to the implementation of this specific activity has filled the National STA Report Template titled "Assessing societal change" (Deliverable T1.1.1), mentioned in the previous section. The template was agreed upon by all involved partners, and the subsequent collection of required information was supported by guidelines which have helped ensuring the homogeneity of statistics and information for as much as possible. A set of questions was also prepared as part of the National STA Report, yet partners have been free to organize desk research and conduct interviews to gather evidence for answering them. Such activities have engaged partners for the entire month of May 2021, and for part of June. Therefore, this Comparative Report reflects the availability of data at that time. It has happened indeed that UNHCR released statistics on migration for the entire 2020 while the responsible partner was working on this Deliverable, and therefore it has been possible to integrate previous incomplete statistics for that year.

The main data sources have been UNHCR Refugee Statistics and Eurostat, which provide the most comprehensive and comparable datasets for a number of migration, economic and social processes ongoing in EU and non-EU countries in Europe. The main informative sources of qualitative interviews have been officers of International Organizations, NGOs employees and local/regional authorities.

In most cases, the team has put together data in tables and graphs that are comparable, because collected via the same methodology. In few cases, which are indicated, we have resorted to mixed sources, less rigorous from a scientific point of view, but equally useful to understand and represent the concerned social/economic phenomenon. In addition, because of a work of verification of the data provided by each partner to improve their comparability, some of the data here presented differ from the ones used in the National STA reports.

The different sources of information and data available in each country, together with the different means used by the partners to retrieve qualitative information on the

[26] See: https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/561356692/oi-emvoliasmoi-sta-kentra-filoxenias-metanaston.

issues here analysed, determine the fact that the content and details here provided may differ for each country.

Since the team has faced numerous data gaps, and considers the latter to be a crucial obstacle for policymaking, all the missing, partially updated statistics have been listed in a specific section of this Deliverable. We hope that the list of data gaps will be useful to inspire further research and strategies to complement such deficiencies.

Main trends

1. Migration

The evolution of the migration flows in the ADRION region

The migration context of the countries considered in this study varies considerably because of the different historical, political and socio-economic backgrounds. While older EU Members such as Italy and Greece have started to witness mass labour immigration already in the 1990s, the mass immigration from third countries is a new phenomenon in the Western Balkans.[27] On the other hand, the Western Balkans countries are certainly not new to the movement, reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees: the wars that determined the dissolution of Yugoslavia pushed many citizens to find refuge in other countries of the same region, and this is just the last of the numerous population movements witnessed in this area in the last century. For the same reason, the migration context of some of these countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, is marked by a high number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

Nonetheless, the analysis of the migration context of this area highlights some common features that, despite the still important political and socio-economic differences, reveal common societal and migration developments and challenges that can trigger future cooperation in this sector. In particular, the commonalities that emerge can favour the exchange of know-how and the establishment of initiatives aimed at developing common responses to the emerging issues. First of all, it is important to notice that Italy and Greece, while already hosting larger numbers of migrants, have historically been countries of emigration, as most of the Western Balkan countries. Although this phenomenon has been more visible before the 1970s of the past century, it is still relevant nowadays in both countries. Here, indeed, especially the economic crisis of the years 2009-2011 has pushed many young people to migrate abroad.[28] This phenomenon is even more visible in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia where the mass emigration of young people abroad is considered one of the main issues and the migration balance remains negative. The only exception in this context is represented by Slovenia, that is characterised by a positive migration balance since the

[27] This term intends to refer to the area including: Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. This same term is used to refer to the migration route passing through these countries (Western Balkan Route) and, for this reason, it is used in this study.

[28] Guido Tintori and Valentina Romei, 'Emigration from Italy After the Crisis: The Shortcomings of the Brain Drain Narrative', in *South-North Migration of EU Citizens in Times of Crisis*, ed. Jean-Michel Lafleur and Mikolaj Stanek, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 49–64, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39763-4; Labrianidis, L., & Pratsinakis, M. (2016). Greece's new emigration at times of crisis (GreeSE Paper no. 99). Hellenic Observatory on Greece and Southeast Europe, LSE. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/66811/1/GreeSE-No.99.pdf.

end of the Second world war, as it has been receiving labour migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries since then until nowadays.[29]

The second main common phenomenon that has interested all countries under consideration is the mass migration flow that in the last 10 years has marked a pivotal change in the movement of migrants and refugees towards Europe. This flow, more and more composed of refugees and asylum seekers from Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia is divided into two main routes: the Central Mediterranean Route, arriving to Southern Italian coasts mostly from Libya and Tunisia, and the Balkan Route, departing from Turkey and crossing Greece and the Balkans countries to reach Europe by land. While the first has been crossed since the beginning of the years 2000s, witnessing a series of peaks and triggering different national and international measures to handle it, the migration through the Balkans is a relatively new phenomenon. The opening of this Route, indeed, has been probably sparked by the long-lasting war in Syria that has pushed millions of Syrian people to first find refuge in Turkey and then to move towards Europe. This flow, peaking in 2015, has caused a political and mediatic turmoil because of its unpredictability and the consequent unpreparedness of the concerned countries to deal with it and because of the high numbers of children and families that were risking their life to cross the sea between Turkey and Greece. As a consequence, in October 2015, the European Union has promoted the joint management of the Route developing a system of hotspots, while the momentary welcoming policies of some EU countries (i.e. Austria, Germany and Sweden) together with the mushrooming of civic initiatives of solidarity across the Route allowed the creation of a 'formalized' channel through which asylum seekers could safely reach Europe and ask for international protection.[30]

Nevertheless, this solution did not last long as in March 2016 the European Union signed a deal with Turkey that marked the official closure of the Balkan Route, which, though, has never really ceased to exist. Indeed, although with reduced numbers, asylum

[29] Dolenc, Danilo (2007). Priseljevanje v Slovenijo z območja nekdanje Jugoslavije po drugi svetovni vojni. Priseljenci (e d. Milan Komac). Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 69–105.

[30] Sometimes referred to also as de facto humanitarian corridor: its main features were that governments allowed transit through their territory, in some cases providing also transportation means, and that identity documents of those transiting were not checked systematically. See Abikova J. and Piotrowicz (2021): Shaping the Balkan corridor: Development and changes in the migration route 2015–16, International Migration. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12828; Bagavos Ch., Kourachanis N., Lagoudakou K. and Xatzigiannakou K. (2021). Chapter 9: Between Reception, Legal Stay and Integration in a Changing Migration Landscape in Greece. In V. Federico & S. Baglioni (Eds.), Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Integration in European Labour Markets A Comparative Approach on Legal Barriers and Enablers. Springer. E book. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-030-672843.pdf; Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža (2016): Legal Implications of the Humanitarian Corridor. V Razor-Wired: Reflections on Migration movement through Slovenia in 2015. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut; Matteo Astuti et al., 'The Balkan Route. Migrants without Rights in the Heart of Europe' (Rivolti ai Balcani, June 2020).

seekers continued to arrive from Turkey to Greece, from where they tried to reach Europe mostly through North Macedonia and Serbia in an illegal manner and facing higher risks. In addition to this, the construction of an anti-immigrant wall along the border between Serbia and Hungary has pushed the refugees flow to seek for other ways to reach Europe: from 2018, a consistent number of refugees started to cross Bosnia and Herzegovina, to then reach Croatia and Slovenia mostly by foot until the border with Italy. This new evolution of the Route determined a new humanitarian crisis because of the absence of reception centres able to host refugees crossing the Bosnian territory and to offer satisfactory assistance, and because of the increasing numbers of violent pushbacks reported in Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and Greece.[31]

The closure of the legal channels allowing the passage or refugees through the Western Balkans determined a change of approach towards immigration also in Greece and the worsening of the living conditions of those hosted in the hotspots on the islands. In this country, the Law 4375/2016 established a clear division between reception and asylum procedures for those entering the country before and after 20th March 2016 – the cut-off date of the EU-Turkey deal. According to the Greek National Report, the government failed to provide means to rapidly evaluate the asylum applications of those who crossed the sea borders after 20th March and were being held in the hotspots for readmission to Turkey. Consequently, the hotspots were over-crowded and reception conditions were poor in sanitation and hygiene, while access to health care was limited.[22] The latest developments in the legal framework for refugees[23] have been criticized for transposing into Greek legislation the absolute minimum standards of protection and guarantees of the EU law.[24] In practice, especially on the hotspot islands, it has led to the significant reduction of fundamental guarantees of the Greek asylum and reception system, making it easier to detain asylum seekers for prolonged periods of time, while creating obstacles to their ability to access a fair asylum procedure and severely impeding their right to an effective remedy.

Together with the emergence of the Balkan Route in the years 2013-2015, the same period witnessed an intensification of the arrivals by boat on the Southern Italian coasts. This new migration flow crossing the Mediterranean had similar characteristics of the one crossing the Balkans, because it was mostly composed of refugees and asylum seekers. Indeed, while the Mediterranean Route has been crossed by thousands of immigrants for at least 20 years, the last ten years have seen the increase of arrivals for humanitarian reasons, evident also in the fact that the residence permits released for asylum and refugee's protection in Italy outnumbered those released for working reasons.[32] The management of these arrivals and the high number of fatalities among migrants, due to shipwrecks, has sparked the political and public debate in Italy and abroad, especially in relation to the possible reform of the current European legislation

[31] 'Border Violence Monitoring Network', accessed 14 June 2021, https://www.borderviolence.eu/; Astuti et al., 'The Balkan Route. Migrants without Rights in the Heart of Europe'.
[32] UNHCR Italy officer, online interview, 07/06/2021.

on asylum application, the Dublin's regulation, and to the rescue work of NGOs in high sea. The consequent public policies launched by the different Italian governments over the years have, on one side, tried to stop these flows from the countries of departure (mostly Libya and Tunisia), and, on the other side, reformed the system of reception and integration several times. With the aim to stop the migration flows by sea, in 2017 the at-the-time Italian Ministry of Interior Marco Minniti has agreed on a deal with Libyan Government of National Accord in order to avoid the departure of boats from the Libyan coasts also through the creation of a Libyan coastguard. The deal has surely resulted in a drop of the arrivals by sea but has also raised numerous criticisms due to the inhuman conditions of the prisons in which refugees and immigrants are kept in Libya as well as for the alleged involvement in the implementation of the deal of groups previously organizing departures.[33]

The data collected on this comparative report aim to analyse the evolution and challenges of the movement of refugees and asylum seekers in the ADRION region, highlighting the main similarities and differences characterising the migration context of the different countries. In the analysis of this data, it is necessary to keep into account two main aspects that affect their collection and presentation: the first is the still important role played by regional refugees and IDPs in the total number of the forcibly displaced population in the Western Balkans; the second is the fact that the transit of the new refugee flow through the Balkans remain mostly undetected by official statistics, probably because the high majority is not registered. For this reason, the graphics below showing the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers - forcibly displaced population - in the selected countries (Figures 2 and 3) do not fully reflect the new wave of refugees passed through Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. In order to integrate these data and visually show the evolution of the Western Balkan route in numbers, a graphic on the numbers of illegal border crossings detected by Frontex is added (Figure 1).

[33] Hermanin, 'Immigration Policy in Italy: Problems and Perspectives'.

Figure 1 - Illegal border crossings in the Western Balkans and Central Mediterranean Routes

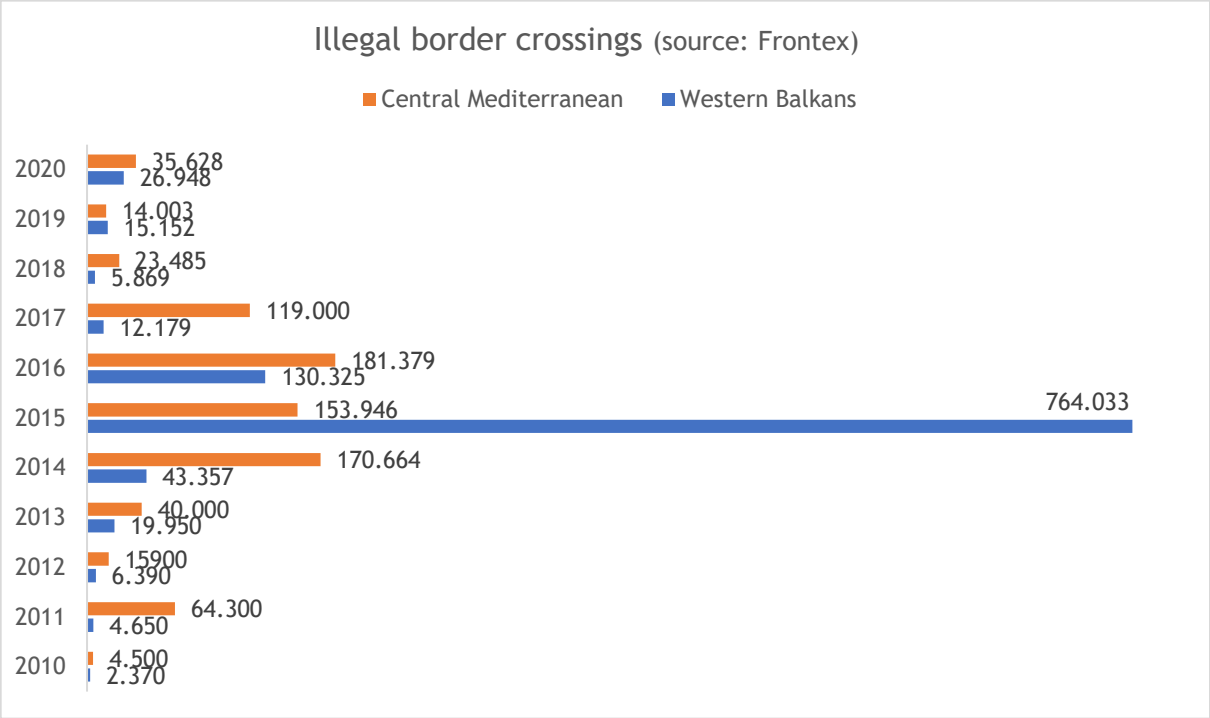


Table 1 - Total "forcibly displaced population" in each country (Source: UNHCR)

Year	*ITALY*	*GREECE*	*SLOVENIA*	*SERBIA*	*BiH*	*CROATIA*
2010	61.326	57.417	4.517	310.740	185.215	88.779
2011	72.767	45.713	227	308.329	176.988	84.904
2012	79.572	38.427	267	303.726	167.601	84.514
2013	90.233	72.980	212	289.926	144.687	67.626
2014	140.255	42.389	317	270.904	143.928	56.026
2015	178.918	51.151	381	258.136	157.623	47.611
2016	247.959	86.569	768	258.646	156.127	41.092
2017	354.690	83.374	880	251.951	152.993	33.156
2018	295.565	137.701	996	249.009	152.057	28.560
2019	270.454	190.872	1.061	249.174	156.190	27.612
2020	284.280	182.197	1.266	247.205	156.156	27.306

Composition of the forcibly displaced population in the ADRION region

The graphs in the following pages represent the composition of the forcibly displaced population in the 6 countries considered in this study according to UNHCR data. Graphs in Figure 2 and Figure 3 present the total forcibly displaced population for each year between 2010 and 2020 and in each receiving countries, dividing it according to the typology defined by UNHCR. The High Commissariat for Refugees divides this population in five groups: refugees under UNHCR's mandate, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons and others of concern.[34] Since not all countries host persons belonging to all these groups, the charts show only the ones that are represented in each country. For instance, IDPs is a category that does not apply to countries such as Italy, Greece and Slovenia and, for this reason, it is not represented. Furthermore, when the numbers of a category are negligible, they have been aggregated to another category. This is the case, for instance, of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia where the numbers of asylum seekers always remain very low and, therefore, have been aggregated to the ones of refugees. Figure 4 represents the demographics of the forcibly displaced population (division by gender and age) in the last year considered (either 2018 or 2019) in the countries where this kind of data is available (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Italy).

[34] For further information on UNHCR definitions, see: https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/methodology/definition/.

Figure 2 Composition of forcibly displaced population in Greece, Italy and Slovenia

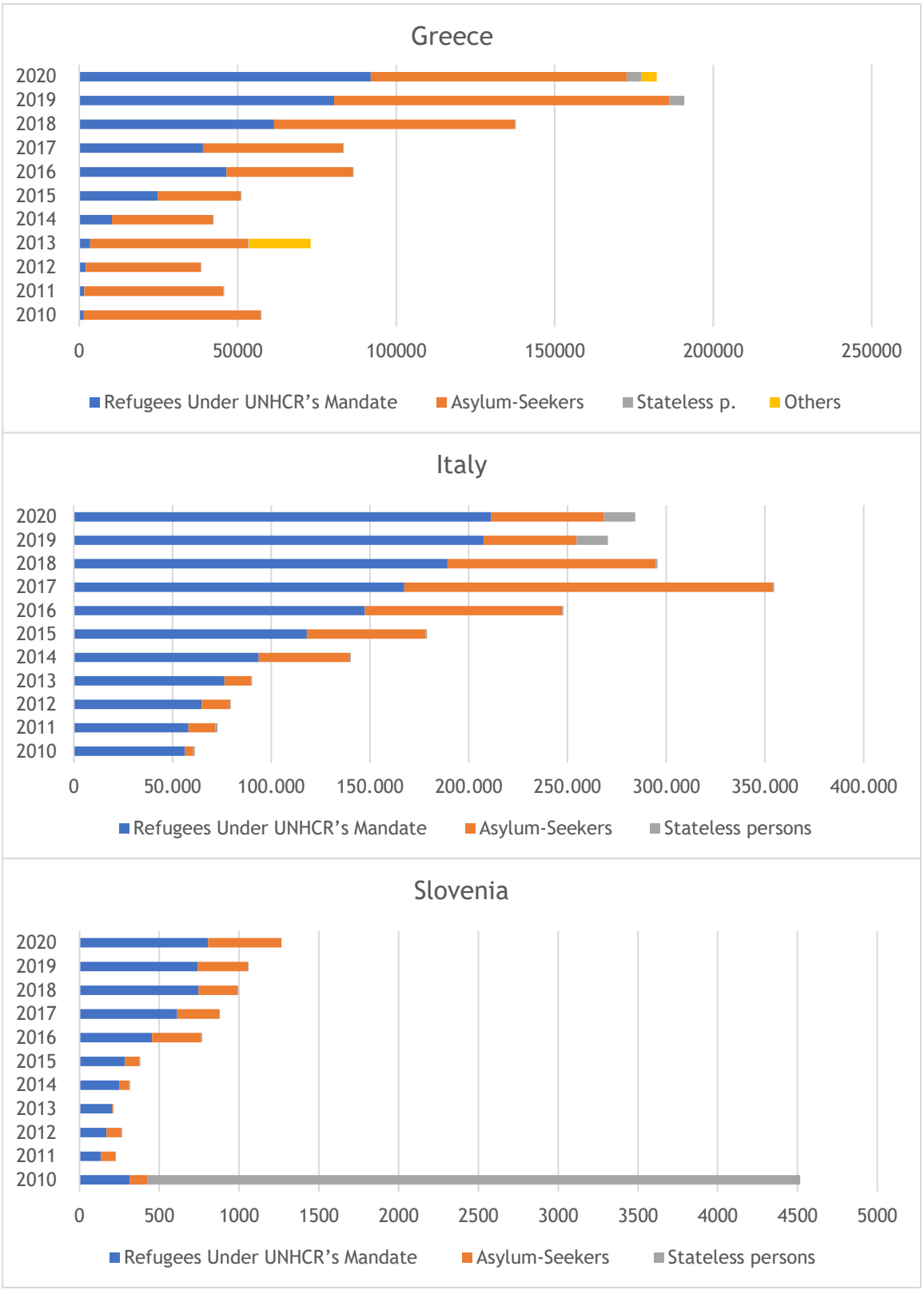


Figure 3 Composition of forcibly displaced population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia

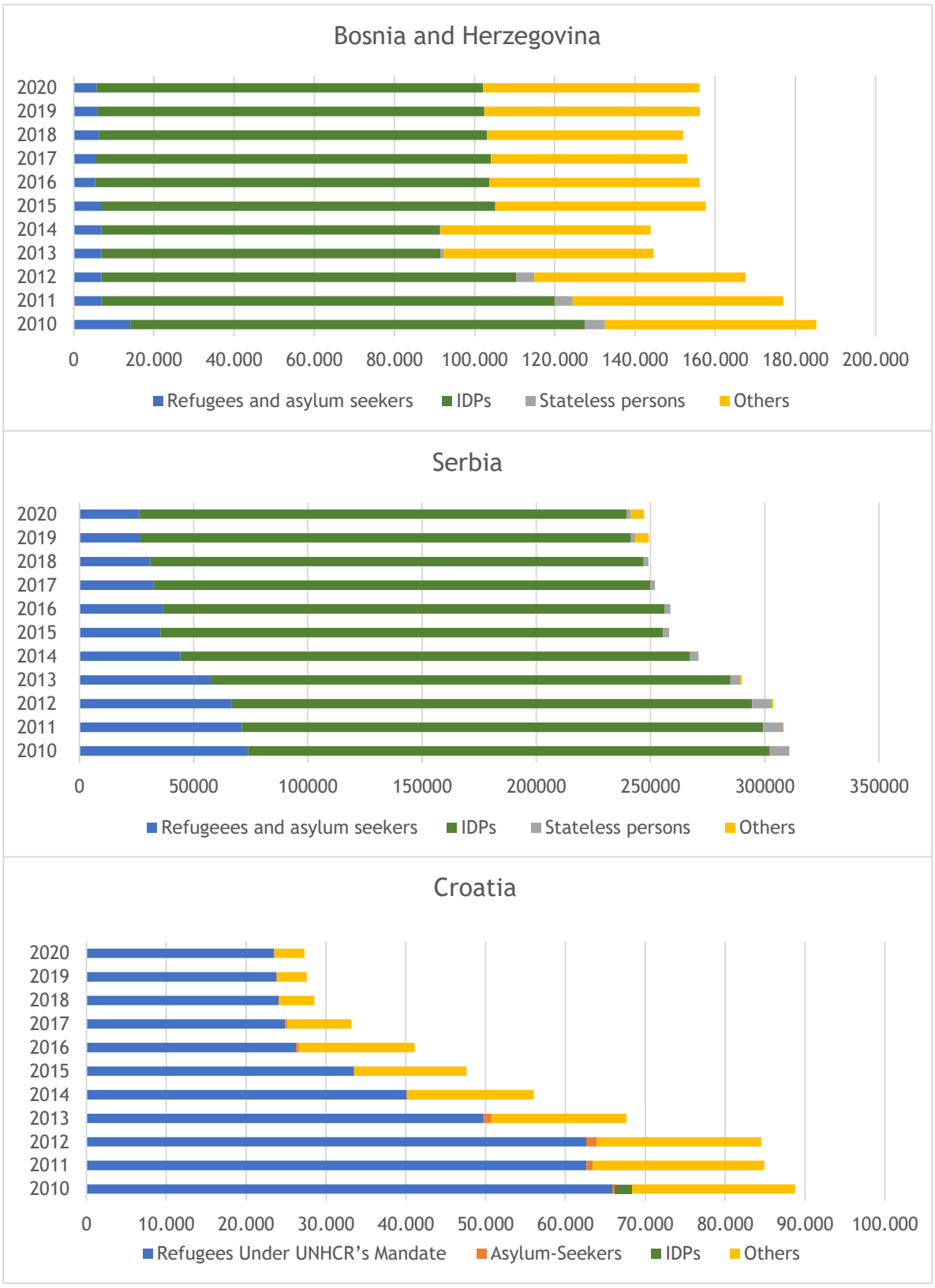
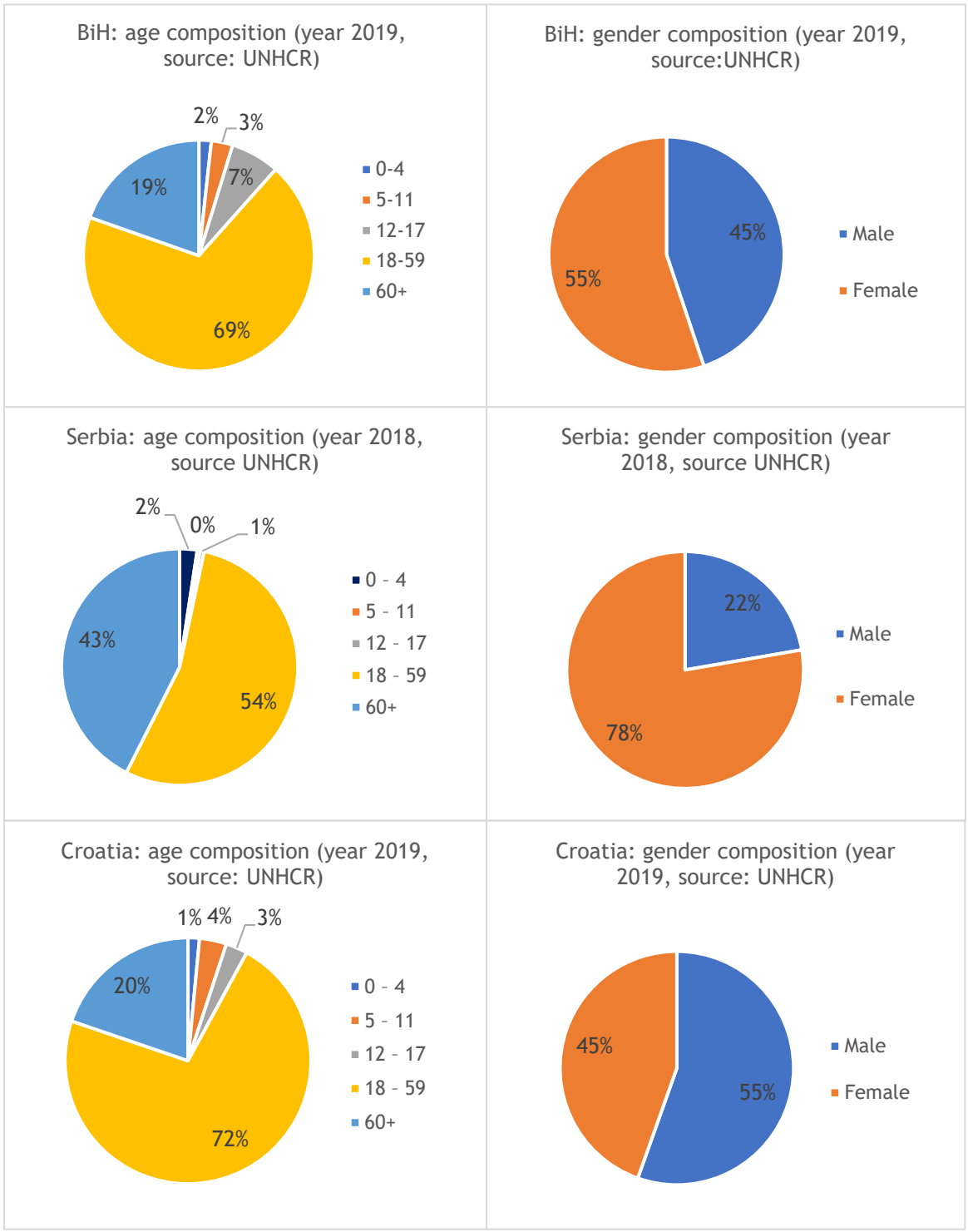
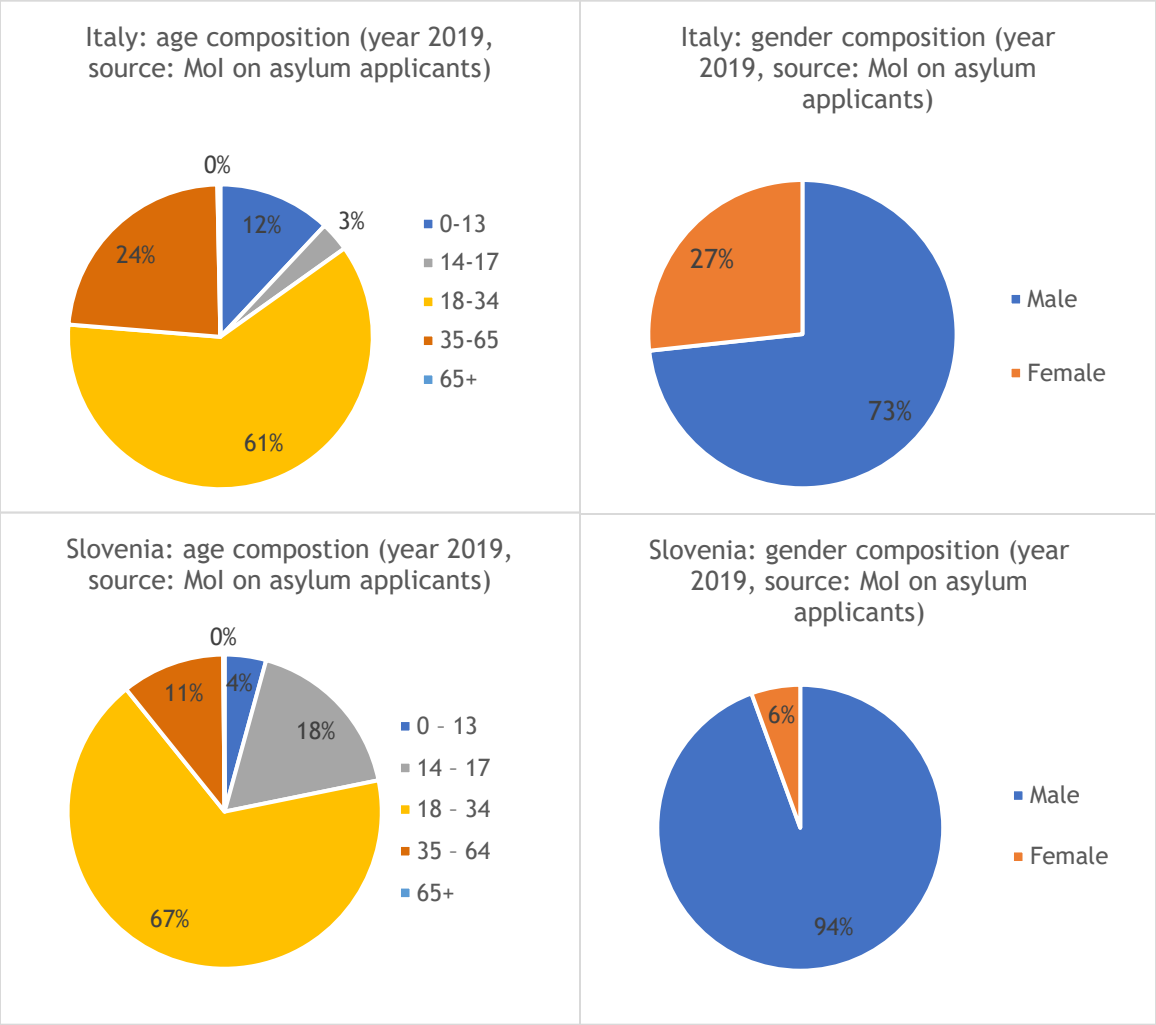


Figure 4 - Composition of forcibly displaced population by gender and age





The above charts on the demographics show some interesting differences between the composition of the forcibly displaced population in Italy and in the Western Balkans, where UNHCR includes within this category also IDPs. For instance, while in Italy the refugee population is mostly represented by male[35] and young individuals, in the Western Balkans countries, the female displaced population is predominant, and a quite significant share is over 60 years old. In the Western Balkans, Slovenia represents an exception, as here the forcibly displaced population is mostly represented by young

[35] Although data provided by the Ministry of Interior refer only to asylum applicants, the composition of this group reflects the composition of the general refugees population as highlighted by other surveys. See: Displacement Tacking Matrix - IOM, 'Flow Monitoring Surveys - Italy 2020', Flow Monitoring Surveys, February 2021, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM_FMS_ITA_2020_brief_final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=10767; Displacement Tacking Matrix - IOM, 'Flow Monitoring in Italy in 2016', Flow Monitoring Surveys, December 2016, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/Analysis_Flow_Monitoring_and_Human_Trafficking_Survey_Italy_2016.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2123.

men. It is also interesting to look at the possible evolution of these data over the years. In the Italian case, the data of 2016 – the first available – show that the male share of the asylum applicants was even bigger (85%), as well as the one of the individuals between 18 and 34 years old (80%). Furthermore, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia these data do not change significantly between 2010, 2018 and 2019, in Croatia the share of female displaced population in 2010 was slightly higher compared to the male population, and this balance was reversed in 2019.

Likely, it might be suggested that the prevalence of female and older individuals among the displaced population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia is due to the fact that the high majority of them are persons who sought for protection in another area of the same region during the wars of the 1990s. In this context, the share of female and older individuals was already significant in that period, and it has probably increased over the years. On the other hand, it might be argued that the evolution of these data in Croatia is the consequence of the new wave of refugees arriving in the country through the Balkan Route, still not detected in the statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Top countries of origin of the refugee population

Always relying on UNHCR data, each National report has collected the three top countries of origin of the refugee population present on their territories each year from 2010 to 2020. In this case, only the sub-category of refugees under UNHCR mandate was considered. Therefore, the picture that comes out from this analysis should not be considered as representative of the entire forcibly displaced population, since, as we have seen, in some countries this is mostly composed by Internally Displaced People. In the infographic below (Figure 5 and Figure 6), we represented visually the main countries of origin of the refugee population in each country considered in this report for the periods 2010-2014 and 2015-2020.

It is interesting to notice how this population changes over the years, most probably because of the impact of the new migratory flows. In the Western Balkans countries, it is noticeable how regional countries of origin have been replaced by third countries, such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, especially in Croatia and Slovenia. This is a sign of the fact that, although still most of this new refugee population aim to reach Western and Northern European countries, an increasing number starts to be integrated in countries of the Western Balkans. The numbers are still very low, but these data seem to suggest that an evolution of the refugee population has started. The effects of the evolution of the Balkan Route appears also in the composition of the refugee population in Greece. Here, Iraq has been replaced by Syria as top country of origin, highlighting the impact of the wave of Syrian refugees that departed from Turkey especially in the period 2014-2016. In Italy as well, the refugee population has changed after the peak of arrivals in 2015-2017. In this country, while the majority of refugees came from the horn of Africa (Eritrea and Somalia) in the period 2010-2014, the following period has

witnessed the arrival of refugees mostly from Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan, that now represent the majority of the refugee population.

Figure 5 - Top countries of origin in the period 2010-2014

Figure 6 - Top countries of origin in the period 2015-2020

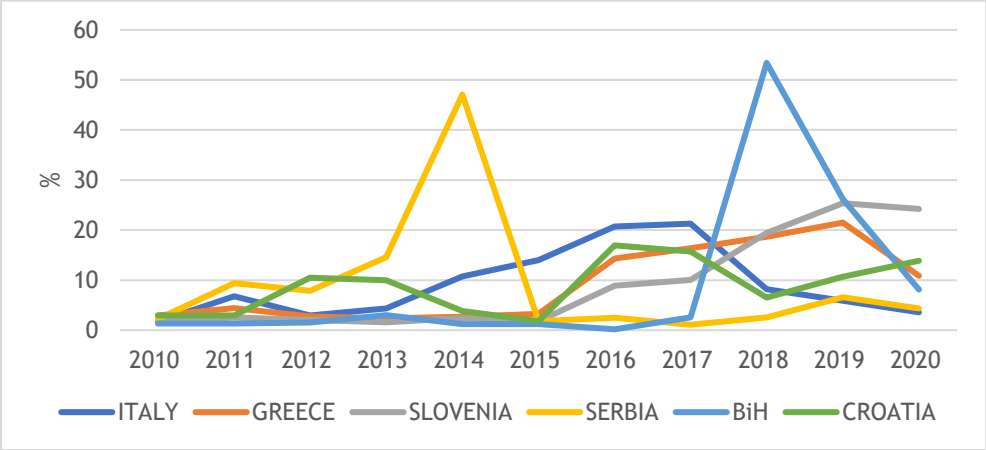
Asylum applications and decisions

The last UNHCR indicators analysed concern the number of asylum applications and the decisions taken in each country for the period considered. Table 2 presents the total numbers of new applications, while Figure 7 represents their distribution over the years in percentage. This data set clearly shows the differences existing between countries, but also their evolution over the years. The most evident difference concerns the total numbers of new applications, which remain always very low for countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia – and partly Serbia and Slovenia – while they exceed the hundred thousand for a couple of years in Italy (2016 and 2017) and the seventy thousand for one year in Greece (2019). Furthermore, if we look at the distribution in the years of these applications, it is noticeable the fact that, while in Italy and Greece the growth of the new application is progressive, followed by a decrease in the last years (Italy peaking in 2017 and Greece in 2019), in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina we assist to two sudden peaks (2014 for Serbia and 2018 for BiH), followed by equally sudden drops. Interestingly, 2014 and 2018 are the years in which the new flow of refugees passed through the two countries, as higher numbers have started being registered in Serbia in the years 2013-2014 and 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This sudden drop of the asylum applications surely represents an issue that requires further investigations to understand the reasons behind it. Different is the situation in Slovenia and Croatia: the first is witnessing a progressive increase of the new applications, started in 2015 and only slightly decreased in 2020 – when Covid-19 has most probably impacted the numbers of new arrivals; Croatia, instead, presents a rather irregular distribution of the numbers of new applications, which remain, in any case, always quite low, never exceeding the two thousand units.

Table 2 - Total asylum applications (new applications, source: UNHCR)

Year	*ITALY*	*GREECE*	*SLOVENIA*	*SERBIA*	*BiH*	*Croatia*
2010	10.047	10.245	245	786	39	335
2011	40.335	15.272	364	3.304	40	830
2012	17.323	9.570	290	2.766	45	1.203
2013	25.682	8.205	224	5.120	89	1.142
2014	63.629	9.410	347	16.565	35	438
2015	83.220	11.323	256	635	35	205
2016	122.949	49.840	1.266	878	5	1.941
2017	126.457	56.942	1.434	379	76	1.804
2018	48.440	64.959	2.775	896	1.584	749
2019	34.864	74.892	3.623	2.316	777	1.222
2020	21.174	37.822	3.458	1.533	240	1.586

Figure 7 - New asylum applications' distribution



Another dataset that reveals a series of interesting information, which can be probably connected to what emerged in the analysis of the asylum applications, and that must be read taking into consideration the numbers of the latter, concerns the results of the asylum decisions. Figure 8 shows these results in percentage dividing the decisions into four groups: recognised, complementary protection, rejected and otherwise closed. As immediately evident in the graph, this last category is particularly relevant for Western Balkan countries, while it mostly does not apply to Italy. According to UNHCR, that provides these data, "otherwise closed" refer to cases in which either the asylum seeker has withdrawn the application before being interviewed or died or did not show up. It, furthermore, applies to cases that are considered inadmissible to the procedure.[36] It is here not possible to conclude what is the reason for so many otherwise closed asylum applications, but it may be assumed that at least a good number of those who applied for asylum at first has then decided to leave the country before a decision was taken. It is noticeable, for instance, that in Serbia in 2014, when the asylum applications had a sudden peak, out of 16.520 decisions only 5 individuals were granted complementary protection, 5 were rejected, while all the others were otherwise closed. In general, in Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina the numbers of applications recognised or accorded with complementary protection are very low, never exceeding the 20% of the total (with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013, where, though, the total number of decisions was very low – 82). It must be also noticed that such small numbers of recognised protections are not counterbalanced with particularly high numbers of rejections. As also shown in Figure 9, the ratio between the number of asylum applications recognised or accorded with complementary protection and the number of rejections highlights how the firsts often outnumber the seconds especially in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, in any case, the total numbers of recognitions and rejections remain very low, very rarely exceeding the 100 decisions for each year.

[36] UNHCR, 'UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2005', 2005, https://www.unhcr.org/464049e63.pdf.

Figure 8 - Results of the asylum decisions in percentage (source: UNHCR)

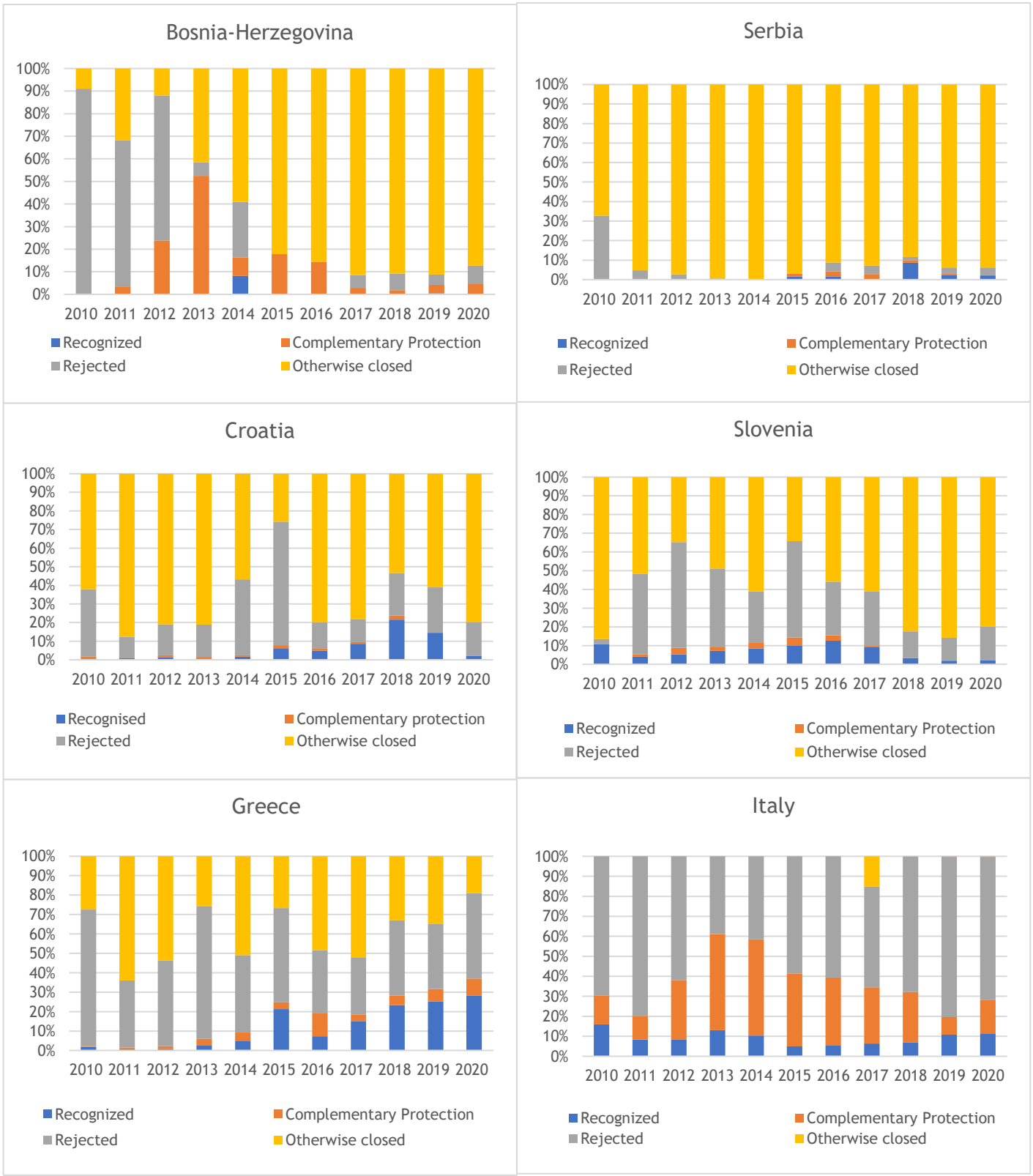
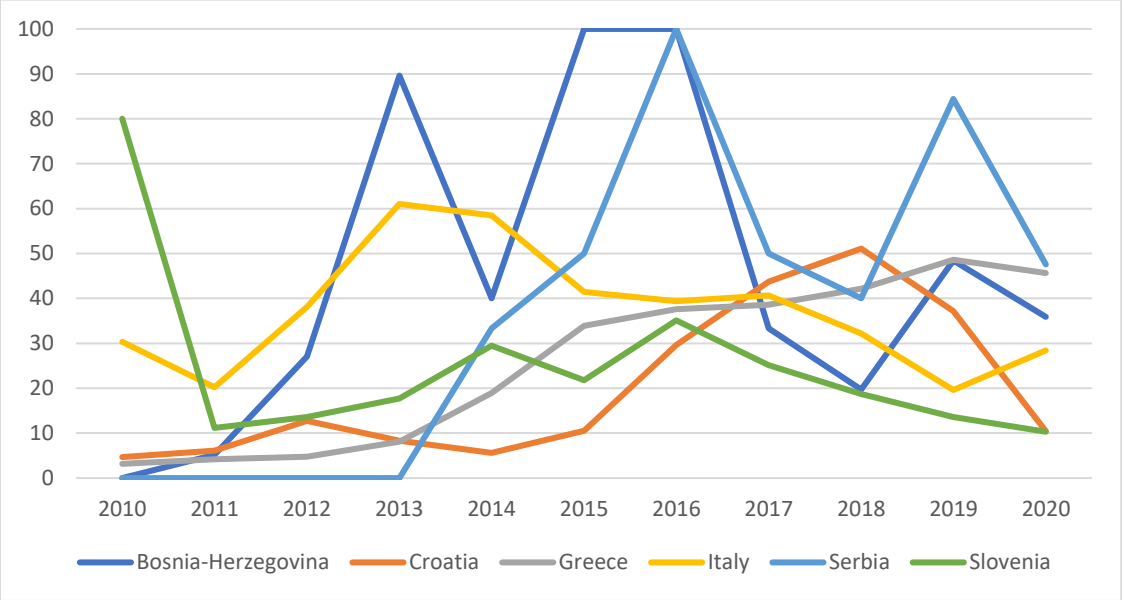


Figure 9 - Ratio between recognised and complementary protection/rejected asylum applications



2. Socio-demographic change

In general terms, during the last decade the ADRION area has experienced a convergence in the trends related to socio-demographic changes. As result, depopulation and ageing stands out as two clear processes which these countries are already dealing with, and that will become more and more significant for societal dynamics in the next decade. The selection of statistics and graphs offered in this section will help visualizing these phenomena.

For what concerns the total population, the project area has overall experienced a slight decline of 1% in the last decade (from 87,809,000 in 2010 to 86,941,000 in 2020). However, the decline has not affected the countries equally. In fact, Italy (+0.76%) and Slovenia (+2.4%) have even increased the recorded total population, while the decline is instead considerable in the other countries: Greece (-3.6%), Serbia (-5.2%), Croatia (-5.7%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (-9%). Clearly enough, diversity in trends does not depend only on natural factors (e.g. mortality rate) but is highly influenced by migration. In Italy, for example, the number of foreign citizens has increased by around one million in the last decade, reaching 5 million in 2020 (72% are non-EU foreigners), that is, 7.4% of the total population.[37] This has counterbalanced the declining number of Italian citizens due to emigration and natural decrease. By the same token, the loss of population in the other ADRION countries is often associated with the emigration rates of the younger cohorts of the population, as described in the previous section.

Importantly, most national statistical offices in the area agree in projecting further population decline in the next decades. The statistics of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) as well suggest a population shrinking of around 10% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Serbia, and of around 5% in Italy and Slovenia by year 2041 (according to the medium variant, which excludes stark changes in natural change rates). By 2051, the regional population may drop below 80 million.

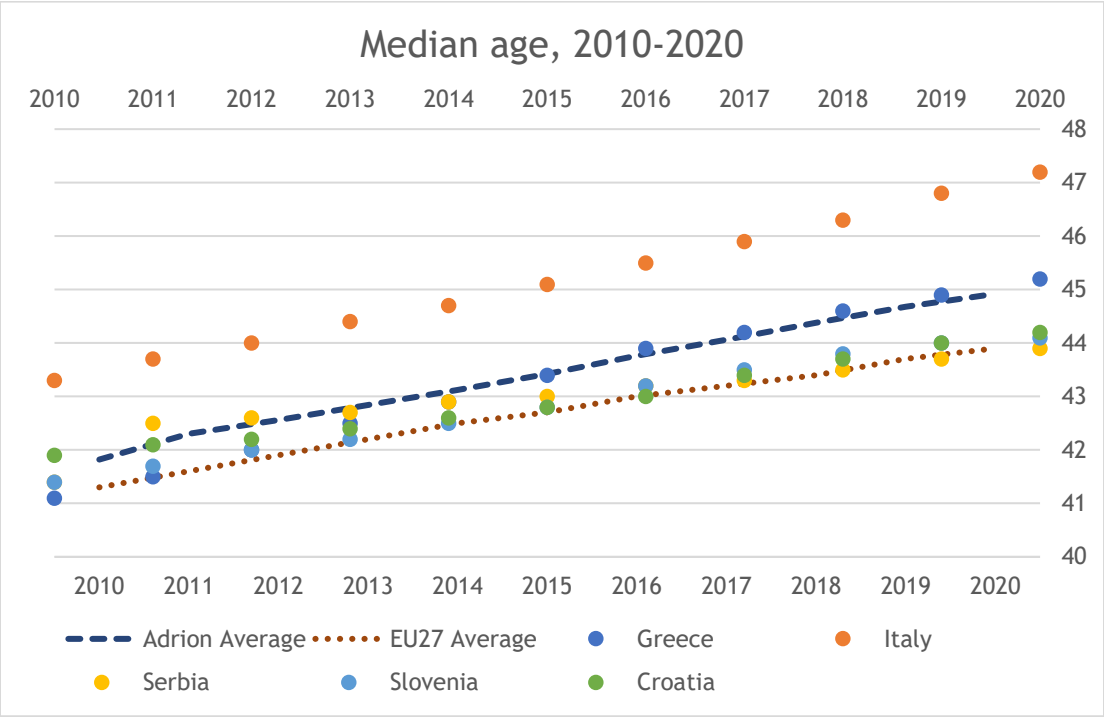
Differences in the demographic performance are also visible within each country (i.e. between sub-state regions) and will be addressed in the section devoted to territorial analysis.

Besides depopulation trends, we observe another crucial transformative process at the societal level: ageing. On the one hand, an ageing population is the positive result of increasing health levels, of the development of healthy lifestyles and more in general of enhanced life conditions. On the other hand, an ageing society may develop new needs and new challenges to be tackled (e.g. elder care, fewer people in working age, lack of innovation). The graph below shows the median age in the project countries.[38] Since 2010, it has risen on average from 41.8 to reach 44.9 in 2020. Greece and Italy are the countries recording the fastest growth of median age, while the other three

[37] Information retrieved on ISTAT database.
[38] Data for Bosnia-Herzegovina are not available.

countries remain below the ADRION average but not below the EU-27 average (Serbia only has in 2020 the exact same aggregated value for the EU area).

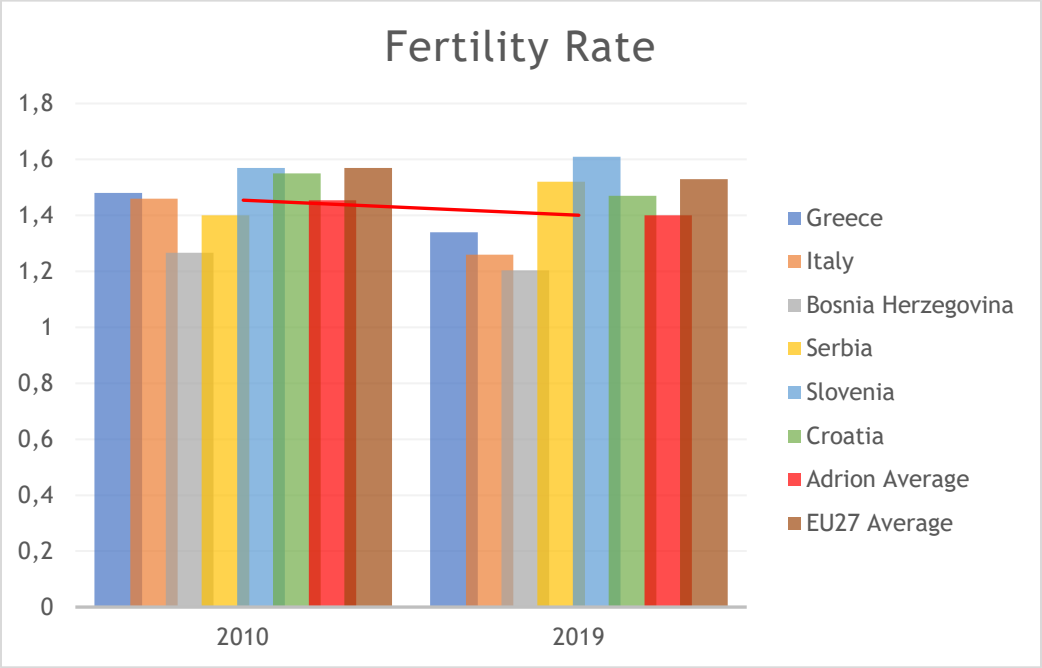
Figure 10 - Evolution of median age, 2010-2020



Strictly connected to aging is the fertility rate.[39] The overall figure for the project area in the period 2010-2019 indicates –3.7%, represented in the graph below by the red line cutting through the two groups of columns. As for the previous cases, there are though interesting differences in the performance of the countries to explore. Greece and Italy are experiencing a dramatic decrease (-9.5 and -13.7% respectively), while the reduction is around 5 points for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

[39] Defined by Eurostat as: the mean number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the fertility rates by age of a given year, and surviving. All data are from Eurostat, except for Bosnia-Herzegovina, for which we have resorted to the statistics of the National Statistical Office.

Figure 11 - Fertility Rate change, 2010 and 2019

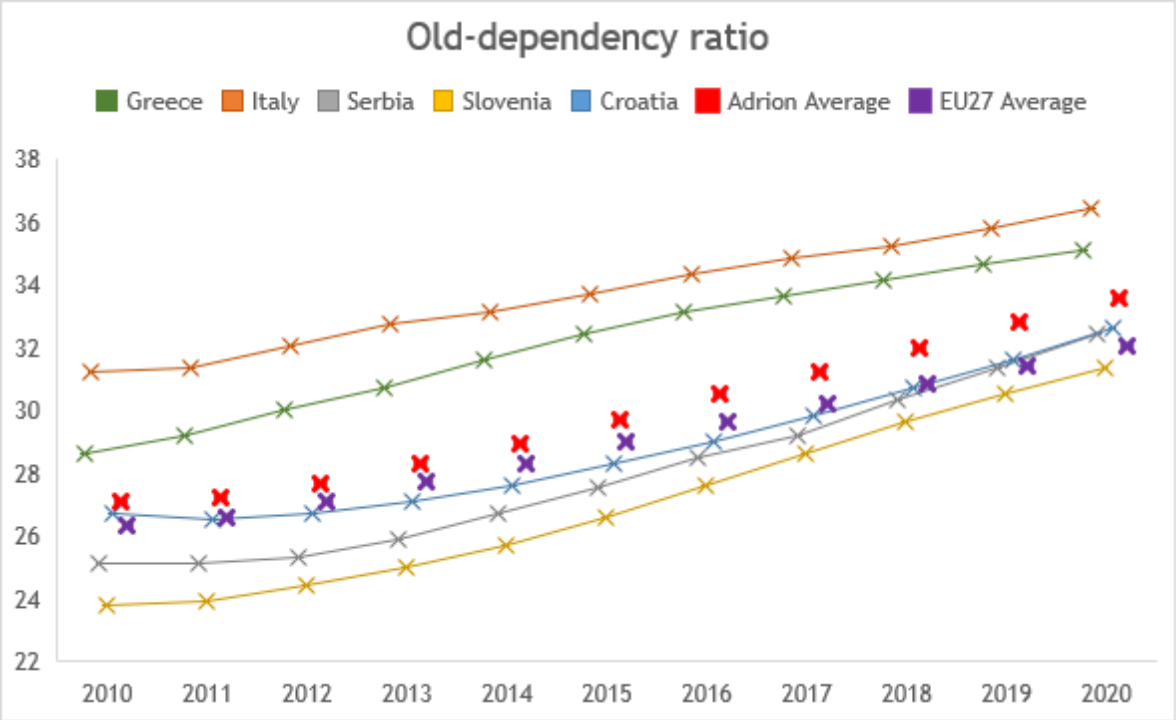


As we see in the graph, Slovenia (+2.5%) and Serbia (+8.5%) have been on a positive trend during the period considered. In the case of Serbia, this suggests once again that emigration from the country is determinant on the socio-demographic developments. As recently stated by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (2020, 47), Serbia "is traditionally an area of emigration. Albeit incomplete, data on emigration show considerable outmigration from the Republic of Serbia towards more developed countries in the EU, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Today it records a clear negative migration balance. Childbearing crisis and its effects related to population ageing and open depopulation will continue and become more profound in the times to come".[40]

Finally, an important indication of socio-demographic developments comes from the statistics on the old-age dependency ratio, which expresses the number of persons aged 65 and over (age when they are generally economically inactive) and the number of persons aged between 15 and 64. In other words, this indicator in combination with the other helps completing the picture of societal change, in terms of future sustainability and generational turnover.

[40] Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia for 2019. Available here: https://kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migration%20Profile%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Serbia%202019.pdf.

Figure 12 - Evolution of old-dependency ratio, 2010-2020



The findings are very similar to those of the figures previously analysed. The overall regional ratio, the number of 65+ every 100 of working age (15-64) has risen over time from 27 to 33.5. Italy (coloured in orange) and Greece (green) are firmly above both ADRION and EU27 averages, yet the sharpest increase recorded in the period is that of Slovenia, which is now close to the EU average (from 23.8 to 31.3).

Figures for Bosnia and Herzegovina, not included in the graph for methodological reasons, are available on the World Bank database:[41] according to the latter, the ration has increased from 42.2 in 2010 to 46.8. While it is not possible to establish a correlation between the data of the two different datasets, what it is possible to conclude at least is that Bosnia and Herzegovina too follow the general trend we have retrieved in the other project countries.

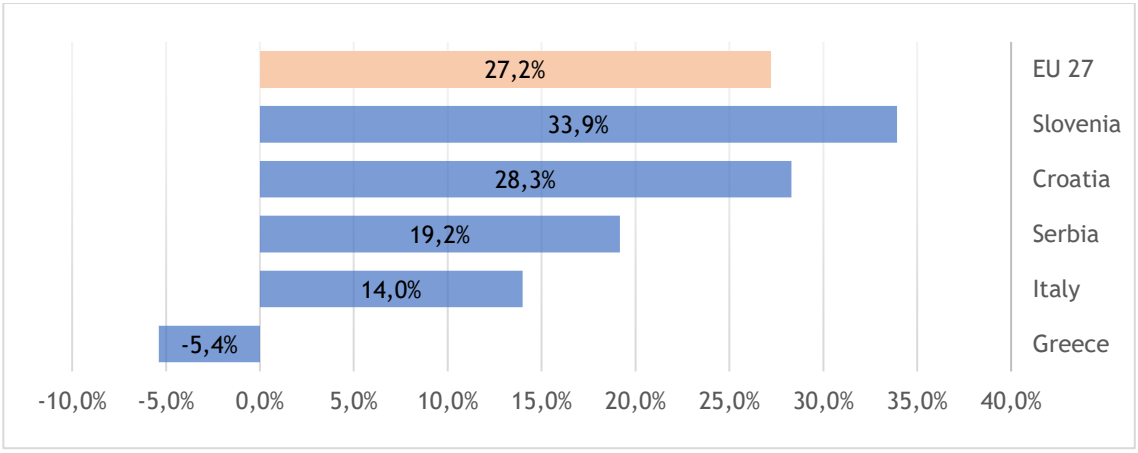
[41] See: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND?end=2019&locations=BA&start=2010.

3. Economy and entrepreneurship

This section deals with the socio-economic context of the countries involved in the REInSER project. It aims at complementing with further analyses the migration and socio-demographic scenario illustrated in the previous sections. The analysis relies on data collected by each project partner for a set of indicators describing growth and employment variations, the environment for business and entrepreneurship, and the overall innovation performance at national and subnational level.

How did ADRION area countries perform in socio-economic indicators in the period under investigation? Preliminary evidence from GDP country comparison shows significant disparities in the levels of variation in the time span 2010-2019. The ten-year per capita growth rates in Figure 13 indicate that ADRION countries are developing at different pace. Croatia is in line with EU27 average (28.3% compared to 27.2%) while the growth rate in Slovenia is seven-point percentage above (33.9%). Economic growth in Serbia and Italy has been slower (respectively 19.2% and 14%), while in Greece is still negative with annual decrease of about -0.5%. Bosnia and Herzegovina shows an overall variation of 41.4% with an annual increase of about 4.1% (with a different indicator).

Figure 13 - GDP change

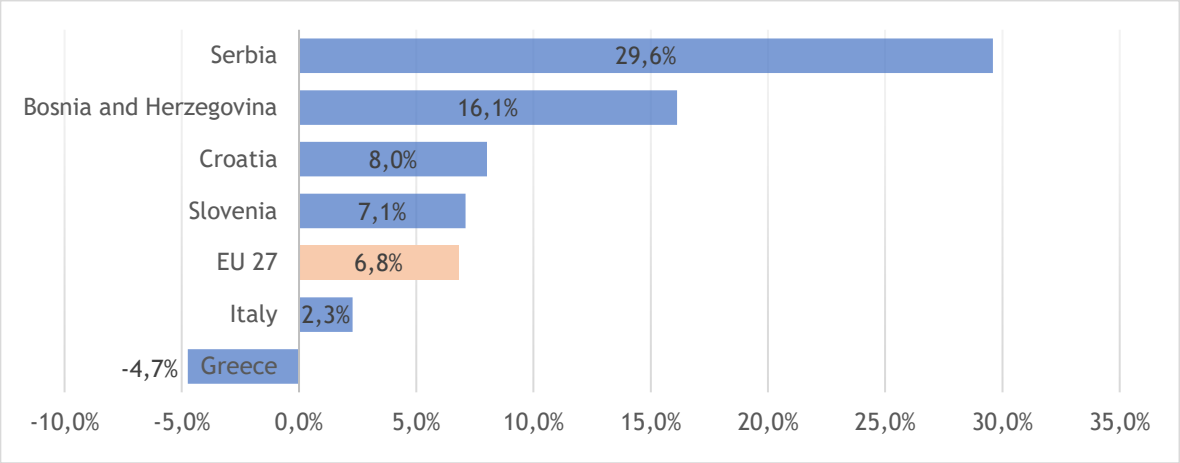


Note: Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices by NUTS2 regions [NAMA_10R_2GDP]. Values expressed in Million purchasing power standards (PPS, EU27 from 2020). Percentage change for Serbia refer to 2012-2019 period.

Regarding the dynamics of employment in the labour force, the observed variations follow the GDP growth but with different patterns across ADRION countries. Figure 14 reveals that the positive employment growth rates in 2010-2020 are in line or slightly above the EU27 average for Slovenia and Croatia, while Serbia displays an exceptional variation of 29.6% in eleven years (a yearly increase of 2.7%), followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina with 16.1% (annual increase of 1.6%). Italy remains far below the EU average with a modest increase (2.3%). Despite the overall change in employment

growth for Greece is still negative, the employment dynamics in the time span considered reveal an increasing trend, although modest, from 2013 onward.

Figure 14 - Employment change



Note: Employment rates by sex, age and NUTS2 regions [LFST_R_LFE2EMPRT]. Percentage of total population 15 to 64 years [Y15-64]. Percentage change for Serbia refer to 2013-2020 period, while data for Bosnia refer to total population 20 to 64 years [Y20-64] in the period 2010-2019.

As far as the analysis of business demography is concerned, the overall number of active enterprises reduced in three countries (Croatia, Italy and Serbia) out of the six constituting the ADRION area, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia the structural composition of the economy (industry and services) seems to have changed significantly. In Greece the number remained essentially unvaried, with a small positive change (Table 3). Data refer to industry and service sectors.

Table 3 - Number of active enterprises: absolute and percentage changes

	Number of active enterprises: Change 2010-2018	% Change	Trends
Bosnia and Herzegovina	+45.786	+213,2%	
Croatia	-11.432	-7,0%	
Greece	+11.563	+1,7%	
Italy	-166.762	-4,3%	
Serbia	-3.481	-3,8%	
Slovenia	+3.259	+69,2%	

Note: data refer to the annual enterprise statistics for special aggregates of activities of Eurostat (NACE Rev. 2) [SBS_NA_SCA_R2]. Variations for Serbia calculated on available data from 2016 to 2018, while variations for Bosnia and Herzegovina refer to the period 2011-2018.

However, according to the standard "high-level aggregation" of ISIC-NACE sectors provided by Eurostat (Table 4), substantial variations are observed in the aggregations and among single sectors.[42]

Table 4 - High-level aggregation of ISIC-NACE sectors

Category	ISIC Rev. 4/ NACE Rev. 2 sections	Description
2	B	Mining and quarrying
	C	Manufacturing
	D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
	E	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
3	F	Construction
4	G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
	H	Transportation and storage
	I	Accommodation and food service activities
5	J	Information and communication
7	L	Real estate activities
8	M	Professional, scientific and technical activities
	N	Administrative and support service activities

Note: according to "high-level SNA/ISIC aggregation A*10/11", category 1 (A - Agriculture), category 6 (K - Financial and insurance activities), category 9 (O-Q Public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities), and category 10 (R-U Other services) are excluded.

In Table 5, it is worth noting how the overall change in industry is driven in large part by activities related to sectors D (electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply) and E (water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities). This holds for all countries except for Serbia (negative). The manufacturing industry (sector C) displays positive changes only in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. In addition, accommodation and food service activities is the only sector (I) with positive changes for all countries (except for Serbia also in this case). However, it is important to underline that in Serbia variations are calculated on a limited data series (three years from 2016 to 2018).

[42] Eurostat NACE Rev. 2 Introductory Guidelines. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1965800/1978839/NACEREV.2INTRODUCTORYGUIDELINESEN.pdf/f48c8a50-feb1-4227-8fe0-935b58a0a332.

Table 5 – Number of active enterprises disaggregated by ISIC-NACE sectors: percentage changes 2010-2018

Country	NACE sectors	% Change	Country	NACE sectors	% Change	Country	NACE sectors	% Change
Greece	B	30,7%	Greece	F	-35,5%	Greece	J	29,5%
Greece	C	-28,1%	Croatia	F	-23,7%	Croatia	J	26,5%
Greece	D	70320%	Italy	F	-18,8%	Italy	J	6,4%
Greece	E	1764,4%	Slovenia	F	-0,8%	Slovenia	J	67,0%
Croatia	B	-27,4%	Serbia	F	-0,8%	Serbia	J	5,8%
Croatia	C	-17,0%	Bosnia-Herzegovina	F	89,5%	Bosnia-Herzegovina	J	149,2%
Croatia	D	175,2%						
Croatia	E	16,8%						
Italy	B	-27,0%	Greece	G	-20,5%	Greece	L	42,7%
Italy	C	-11,5%	Greece	H	-11,7%	Croatia	L	-7,6%
Italy	D	122,1%	Greece	I	13,2%	Italy	L	-1,3%
Italy	E	1,9%	Croatia	G	-22,8%	Slovenia	L	67,0%
Slovenia	B	-13,9%	Croatia	H	-14,7%	Serbia	L	19,9%
Slovenia	C	14,9%	Croatia	I	5,8%	Bosnia-Herzegovina	L	132,9%
Slovenia	D	115,1%	Italy	G	-7,9%			
Slovenia	E	17,8%	Italy	H	-11,1%			
Serbia	B	-9,7%	Italy	I	14,6%	Greece	M	13,7%
Serbia	C	-6,8%	Slovenia	G	7,6%	Greece	N	-15,3%
Serbia	D	-2,5%	Slovenia	H	0,0%	Croatia	M	31,3%
Serbia	E	-9,8%	Slovenia	I	47,6%	Croatia	N	23,7%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	B	-18,4%	Serbia	G	-7,8%	Italy	M	6,8%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	C	116,2%	Serbia	H	-0,1%	Italy	N	3,3%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	D	35,8%	Serbia	I	-0,8%	Slovenia	M	56,1%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	E	16,6%	Bosnia-Herzegovina	G	122,8%	Slovenia	N	69,2%
			Bosnia-Herzegovina	H	240,0%	Serbia	M	-0,1%
			Bosnia-Herzegovina	I	1335,3%	Serbia	N	-0,1%
						Bosnia-Herzegovina	M	1790,3%
						Bosnia-Herzegovina	N	104,9%

Note: data refer to the annual enterprise statistics for special aggregates of activities of Eurostat (NACE Rev. 2) [SBS_NA_SCA_R2].

Information about the share of active companies owned by foreigners is lacking across all countries, except for Italy where a growing trend is observed over the entire period and across all Italian regions of the ADRION area. The entrepreneurship of migrants seems to play a key role, at least in Italy. In 2020, companies owned by foreigners accounted for more than the 10% of the national total of firms, with an average increase of about 6% in the last three years. However, at this stage we cannot make a full comparison on these indicators given the shortage of data for ADRION countries.

Regarding the distribution of legal entities, in absolute terms the form of "social enterprise" seems more common in Italy compared to other countries (Table 6). However, in Italy this kind of entrepreneurial initiatives has longer tradition with first forms appearing in the eighties, with a full institutionalisation with the Law no. 381 in 1991. Despite this, the relative data indicate that in 2018 social enterprises represent less than 0,2% of the total in Greece and Slovenia, and the 0,4% in Italy. Looking at the available data for ADRION countries, the average growth rate in Italy is about 14% from 2010 to 2018, while figures for Slovenia and Greece reveal that the number is considerably increasing. Such increase can be explained by the recent nature of this form of enterprise, institutionalised in 2011 both in Greece (law 4019/2011) and Slovenia (Act on Social Entrepreneurship 2011).[43] In addition, a recent legislative act broadened the field of social enterprises in Greece in 2016.[44]

Table 6 – Number of social enterprises: absolute and percentage changes

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change	% Change
Greece	102	352	560	684	870	839	1139	1348	1507	1.405	1277,5%
Italy	13336	13941	14342	14644	14859	15100	15189	-	-	1.853	13,9%
Slovenia	5	17	49	95	221	221	241	253	270	265	5200%

Note: data refer to national official statistics for enterprises. Data not available for Italy in 2019 and 2020: variations calculated using years 2012 and 2018.

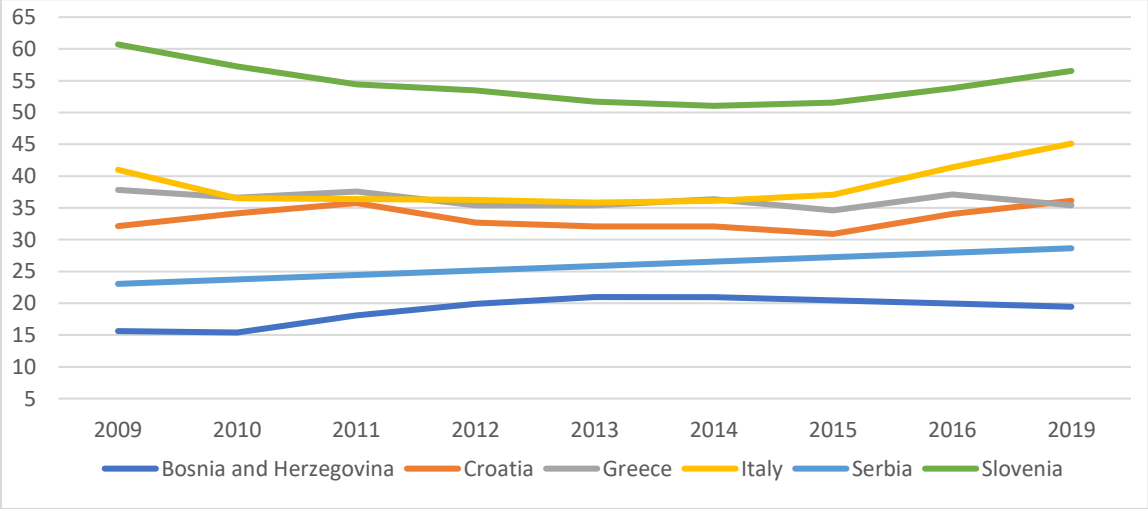
However, evidence analysed so far illustrates a partial overview of the overall economic context. Economic growth does not equal to productivity, and positive variations in GDP and employment over time, or the increase in number of companies, usually represent a general measure of economic prosperity (irrespective of how higher production is achieved). Entrepreneurship is also a key dimension enhancing economic performance. A strong entrepreneurial ecosystem contributes to overall productivity by enhancing

[43] On this point, see Tomaževič et al. 2018, Social Entrepreneurship: Case of Slovenia (available at https://zavod14.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Social-Entrepreneurship_Case-of-Slovenia.pdf).
[44] For further details on Greece see Varvarousis, A., Tsitsirigkos, G.(2019). Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe. Country Report Greece, European Commission.
(available at https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21741&langId=en).

the levels of market efficiency and by promoting the efficient exploitation of resources and innovation.

To measure and compare country entrepreneurial performances, the GEDI Institute combines individual data with contextual institutional factors along different areas and dimensions to build a composite indicator: the Global Entrepreneurship index (henceforth GEI).[45] Evidence from GEI reveals that ADRION area is characterised by significant disparities in levels of development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Although recent data indicate that disparities are narrowing, the gap among countries remains high (Figure 15). Slovenia has the highest the overall index (56.5) and is ranked among the top 25 globally. Italy, Greece and Croatia are far below, positioned in the middle, with scores ranging between 35 and 45 and no significant variations until 2015. It is worth noting that Italy is ranked among the top 10 biggest gains in GEI score at global level in 2019, compared to the previous year. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina remain below this group scoring respectively 28.6 and 19.4.

Figure 15 - Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI): trends



Note: authors' elaboration based on data collected from GEI datasets and reports available at https://thegedi.org/

According to the GEI methodology, entrepreneurial ecosystems are composed of different dimensions, represented by fourteen sub-systems (pillars), each contributing to the identification of three systems (sub-indexes): "Entrepreneurial Attitudes" (from pillar 1 to 5), "Entrepreneurial Abilities" (from pillar 6 to 9), "Entrepreneurial Aspiration" (from pillar 10 to 14). In turn, the three sub-indicators constitute the building blocks of the composite GEI index.[46] Figure 16 below illustrates how ADRION

[45] https://thegedi.org/global-entrepreneurship-and-development-index/.

[46] Entrepreneurship is defined as "the dynamic, institutionally embedded interaction between entrepreneurial attitudes, entrepreneurial abilities, and entrepreneurial aspirations by individuals,

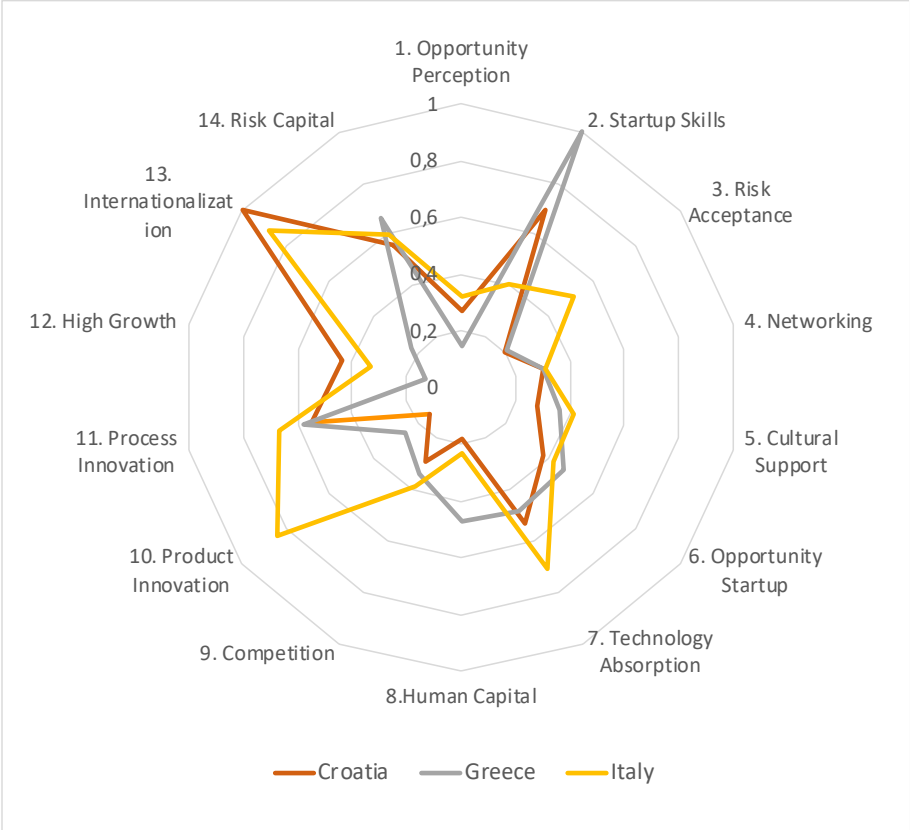
countries performed in 2019 according to the different pillars constituting the composite GEI index. The first graph shows that Slovenia, the top performer, has highest scores in different pillars in each of three areas representing the ecosystem: entrepreneurial attitudes, abilities, and aspirations. Looking at the following graphs, it is worth noting how middle performers (Croatia, Greece and Italy) has similar patterns in start-up skills, technology absorption, internationalization, while low performers (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) are very far except for Serbia start-up skills. Finally, all countries share similar profiles with respect to the weakest areas concerning high growth, cultural support, and networking.[47]

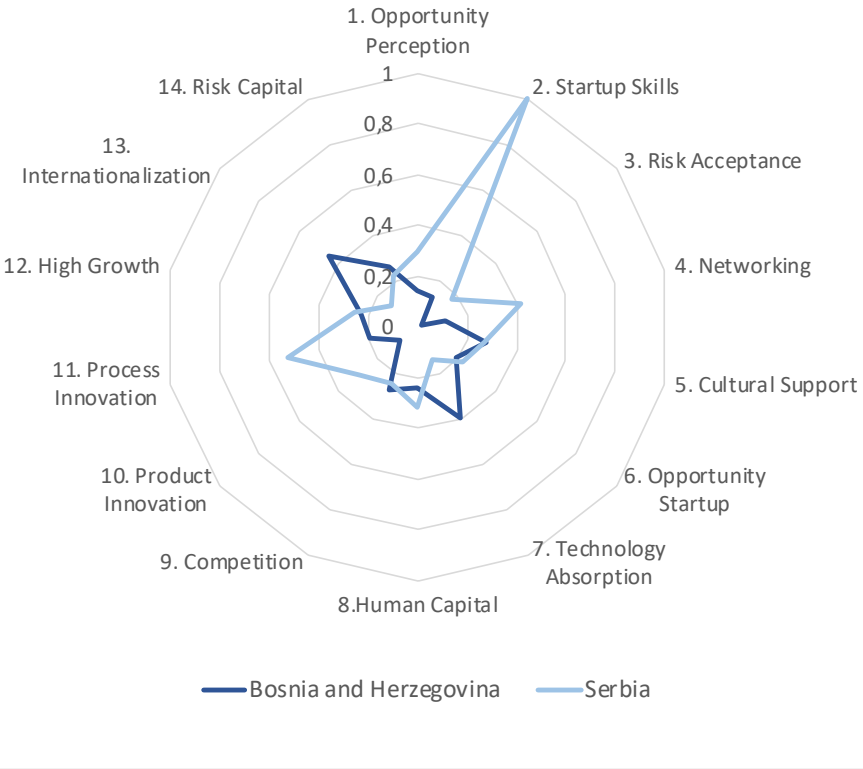
Figure 16 - Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) in 2019: Pillars

Note: authors' elaboration based on data collected from GEI datasets and reports. For further comparisons see also the interactive data explorer tool at the following link: https://thegedi.org/tool/

which drives the allocation of resources through the creation and operation of new ventures" (Ács et al. 2019, The Global Entrepreneurship Index). According to GEI report 2019, "entrepreneurial attitudes are about how a country thinks about entrepreneurship. In fact, what does your mother think about it? The second sub index is about abilities. Can you do it? Do you have the skills? The third sub index is about aspirations. Do you want to build a billion-dollar company?".

[47] For details about the measurement of each pillar please refer to Ács et al. 2019, The Global Entrepreneurship Index, pp.15-18.





Note: authors' elaboration based on data collected from GEI datasets and reports. For further comparisons see also the interactive data explorer tool at the following link: https://thegedi.org/tool/

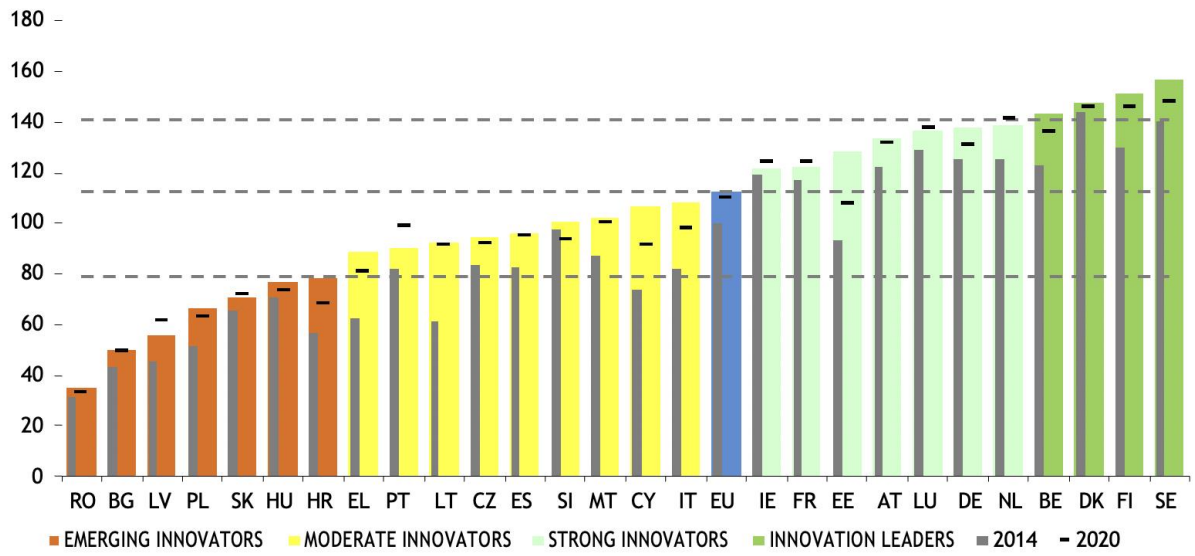
Entrepreneurial Ecosystems are complex socio-economic structures and to understand how they work and evolve over time it is important to look at the main components, that is how agents operate in the ecosystem and how institutions decide the rules. Considering the wide within country disparities in Italy and Greece, this would call for a deeper investigation of structural aspects also at disaggregated level. Unfortunately, current GEI dataset are not provided with regional disaggregation over time.

In order to provide a synthetic comparative measure of country innovation performances, the data below report evidence from the latest European Innovation Scoreboard. The composite indicator is based on 32 variables of innovative performance including data collected for R&D expenditures, R&D personnel, educational attainment, digitalisation, patent applications, among other measures. Looking at the general country profile, Figure 17 indicates ADRION countries ranking as "Moderate Innovators" (Italy, Slovenia, Greece) and as "Emerging Innovators" (Croatia) in 2021.[48] Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, not indicated in the graph below, are also included in the latter category. This means that countries performance is between 50% and 90% of the EU average and below 50% of the EU average respectively, following the categories of "Innovation leaders" and "Strong innovators".[49] The overall picture indicates improvements across EU countries with lower-performing countries growing faster than higher-performing ones. Compared to 2014, Greece and Italy gained about 25%, while Serbia gained slightly less than 20%. The index for Bosnia and Herzegovina remained essentially unvaried in the period 2014-2021.

[48] For further details refer to the European Innovation Scoreboard https://interactivetool.eu/EIS/EIS_2.html ; https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/scoreboards_en

[49] Performance groups are based on the Summary Innovation Index, which is a composite indicator obtained by taking an unweighted average of the 32 indicators in the latest version.
1. Innovation leaders: countries where performance is more than 20% above the EU average.
2. Strong Innovators: countries where performance is between 90% and 120% of the EU average.
3. Moderate Innovators: countries where performance is between 50% and 90% of the EU average.
4. Emerging Innovators: countries where performance is below 50% of the EU average.

Figure 17 - European Innovation Scoreboard 2021



Note: source Eurostat, European Innovation Scoreboard (2021).

Regarding the overall approach to integration policies, the "Migrants Integration Policy Index" (MIPEX) provides a standardised measure for international comparisons.[50] According to the latest data of MIPEX, ADRION countries are placed in different categories, characterised by various approaches and levels of policy development.

MIPEX ranks countries grounding on their scores in three key dimensions: basic rights, equal opportunities, secure future. According to this framework, Slovenia, Serbia, Greece, and Croatia are classified as countries with "equality on paper", having the same approach. However, despite this, Slovenian and Serbian policies are more developed ("halfway favourable"), while in Greece and Croatia are "slightly unfavourable" and therefore less developed. This means that immigrants in Slovenia and Serbia enjoy equal rights and long-term security, but not equal opportunities, while in the other case countries do not provide equal opportunities and goes only halfway with respect to basic rights and a secure future. Italy is classified as a country with a "temporary integration" approach (slightly favourable), meaning that immigrants enjoy basic rights and equal opportunities, but not equal security, as they face obstacles to settle long-term (MIPEX 2020). Data for Bosnia and Herzegovina are not available.

Looking at the overall score for 2019, Italy scores 58 out of 100, above the EU28 average (49) and the OECD average (56), although the policy change since 2014 is negative (-1).[51] This is indicative of more opportunities than obstacles for integration, while the slightly unfavourable policies in the areas of integration of political participation and

[50] For further details refer to: https://www.mipex.eu/key-findings.
[51] Note that on the whole sample the country average policy change between 2014-2019 was +2 points (on the MIPEX 100-point scale).

access to nationality require improvements. In the period 2014-2019, Serbia experienced major improvements in the overall score with a +5-points variation going above the EU28 average (50), while Slovenia (48) and Greece (46) are gradually catching up with the EU28 average with +3-points change since 2014. Croatia (39) remains well below the EU threshold.

Looking at labour market mobility indicator of MIPEX,[52] immigrants seem to have better access to employment and targeted support among EU Members. Italian and Greek contexts are ranked as "slightly favourable", below the top category of the "favourable" traditional immigration countries, while Croatia and Serbia are classified below as "halfway favourable". In general, major improvements emerged in Greece as it provided basic support and access to information for immigrant workers and entrepreneurs (MIPEX 2020). Slovenia has the weakest support ranking in the bottom part as "slightly unfavourable".

[52] For further details refer to: https://www.mipex.eu/labour-market-mobility.

4. Territorial analysis

This section extends the analysis of the socio-demographic and economic trends focusing on the regional level in the Adrion area. The aim is to move beyond the overall country pictures, exploring the sub-national dimension of the phenomenon under investigation and looking for common patterns and differences across Adrion area. With this aim, the section presents different graphs showing how some of the main indicators considered in this study have varied between 2010 and 2020 in the NUTS2 regions. In order to do so, the graphics consider the percentage change, highlighting the regions where a specific data has grown or decreased and how much.

Depopulation trend at the NUTS2 regional level

As already highlighted in the socio-demographic section, one of the main processes highlighted in the analysis is depopulation, concerning most of the countries included in this study. Figure 18 shows the variation of the population in NUTS regions between 2010 and 2020,[53] clearly showing how depopulation trend concerns most of the territory. Indeed, the only regions that registered a growth in the resident population are part of Northern Italy, the Eastern Islands of Greece, the region of Belgrade and Slovenia. All the others have witnessed a decrease in this data, more or less intense.

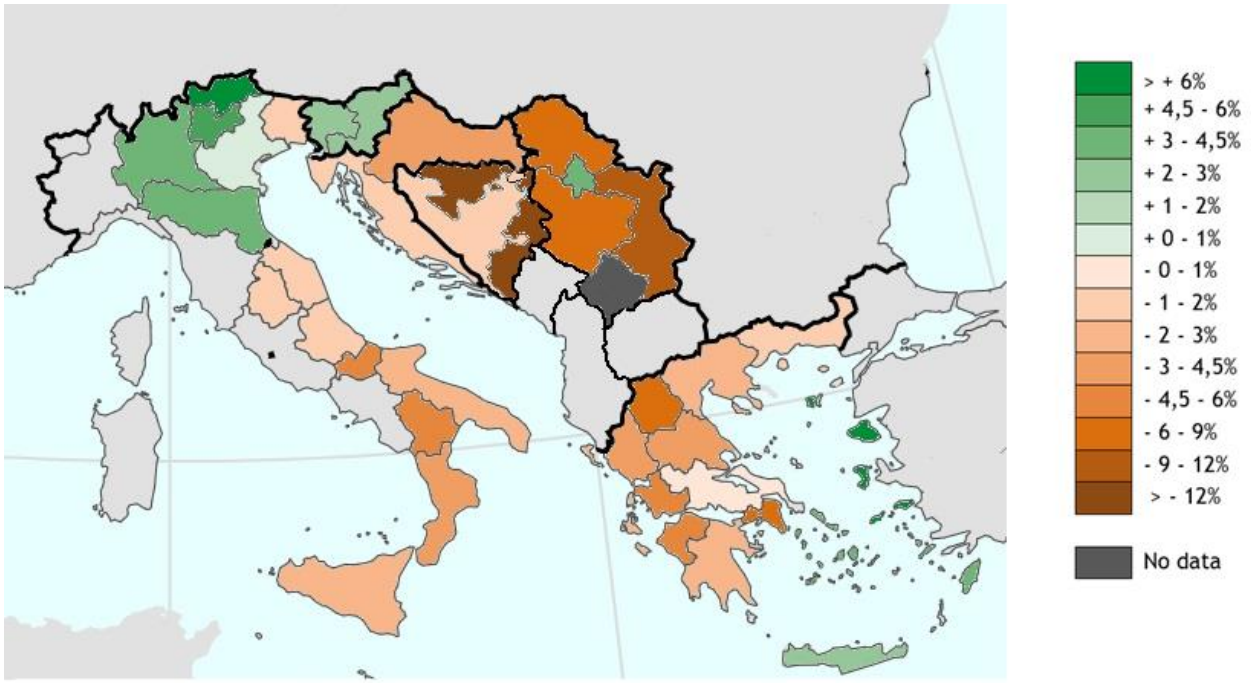
In this context, Greece is the state that presents major differences between regions: while Dytiki Makedonia and Attiki are among the regions that overall have lost more population in the last decade (respectively –7.6% and -6.6%), the regions of Notio Aigaio and Voreio Aigaio are among the ones that have witnessed major growths (respectively +4.5% and + 14.7%). Particularly interesting is the case of the region of Voreio Aigaio that is by far the one with major population growth, followed by the province of Bolzano, in Italy, where the variation of the resident population registered a +7%. As it will be further shown also in the analysis of the other indicators, the region of Voreio Aigaio[54] is a case where socio-demographic indicators present a sharp deviation compared to the trends registered in other regions. The reasons behind this phenomenon are not perfectly clear: while there is some evidence that the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees on the Greek islands might have impacted the socio-

[53] With the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where data on the two entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) have been retrieved within local statistical databases that did not present data for all the years. In Federation, data on the resident population were available between 2013 and 2019, while in Republika Srpska between 2010 and 2018.
In addition, Slovenia does not collect data according to NUTS2 regions, and, therefore, the national level was considered in filling the map.
[54] The Greek region of Voreio Aigaio includes 9 islands that are located in fron to Turkey. They include the islands of Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Ikaria and Lemnos.

demographic and economic trends[55], there are not enough studies on this matter to conclude that migration has played a major role, and this phenomenon does not have other origins.

In Italy, the map clearly shows the differences between Northern and Southern regions, that mostly suffer from depopulation processes – in particular Basilicata, -4.8%, and Molise, -5.1%. Here, this difference can be explained by the still relevant economic gap between the two areas that pushes many young people from Southern regions to look for better economic opportunities in the North of Italy, or abroad. The lack of economic opportunities and the consequent mass emigration of labour force abroad may also partly explain the degrowth of the population in the Western Balkans, where only

Figure 18 - Variation of the regional population NUTS2 2010-2020



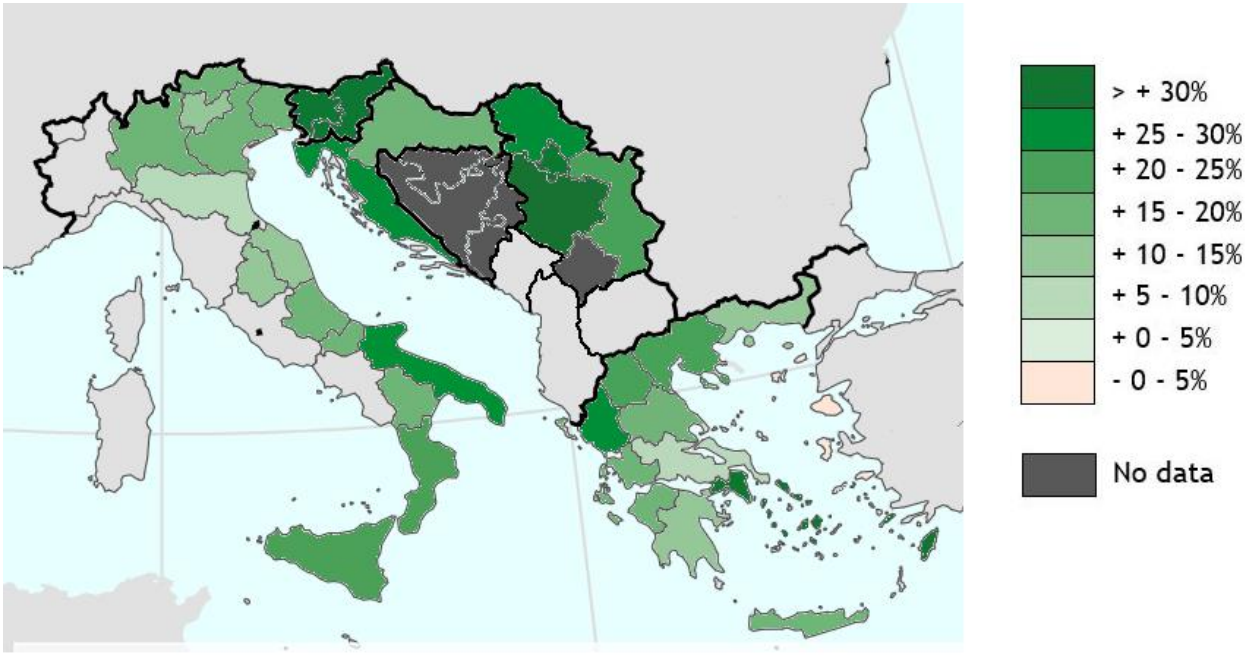
Slovenia and the region of Beograd registered a positive trend. In this area, the regions marked by major negative variations are Sumadija and Western Serbia (-7%), Southern and Eastern Serbia (-10%) and Republika Srpska (-19.9%).

[55] ESPON, 'Migrare – Impacts of Refugee Flows to Territorial Development in Europe' (ESPON, 2019); C. Petropoulou, 'Local Economies and Socio-Spatial Segregations in the Aegean Islands: Touristic Development versus Refugee Arrivals? The Case of Lesvos Island', in *International Residential Mobilities: From Lifestyle Migrations to Tourism Gentrification*, ed. Josefina Dominguez-Mujica, Jennifer McGarrigle, and Juan Manuel Parreño-Castellano, Global Change and Tourism Geographies (Springer, 2021).

Ageing processes at the NUTS2 regional level

Figures 19 and 20 show the ageing process that is affecting all the countries considered in this study. The variations of the first indicator analysed, old-age

Figure 19 - Variation of the old-age dependency ratio in NUTS2 regions 2010-2020

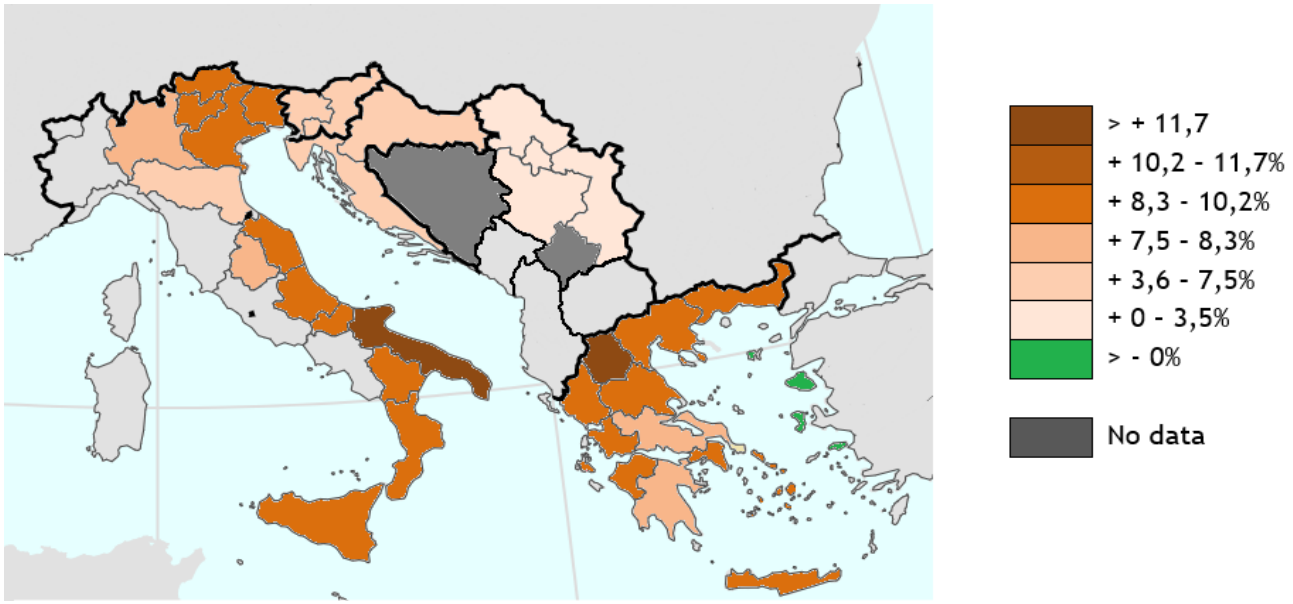


dependency ratio, highlight how all the regions are going through a quite sharp increase of this indicator, with the sole exception of the Greek region of Voreio Aigaio, which, as already mentioned, deviates in relation to all the trends that affect the rest of the region. The major increases of this indicator are registered in the regions of Sumadija and Western Serbia (+35%), Attiki (+33.3%) and Slovenia (+31.5%), here considered as the whole country since data on NUTS regions are missing. The regions that, instead, have gone through minor increases of the old-age dependency ratio are Emilia-Romagna (+ 7.9%), Sterea Ellada (+9.9%) and the Autonomous province of Trento (+11.6%). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, data on the old-dependency ratio are not available at the entity level and only for the years between 2010 and 2014 at the national level (indicating a slight decrease of this ratio - 1,4%). Because of the lack of data for all the years, allowing a proper comparison with the other regions, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been left blank in this map.

Regarding the variation of the median age in ADRION region, this trend is in line with the ageing process already highlighted. All regions considered, with the exception of Voreio Aigaio where median age has decreased (-5.2%), have registered are more or less significant increase of the population's median age. The three

regions that have witnessed major increases are Dytiki Makedonia (+12.1), Puglia (+11.6%) and Basilicata (+11%), while the Serbian regions of Beograd, Southern and Eastern Serbia and Vojvodina are the ones where the population's median age increased the least (respectively, +1.9%, +3% and +3.1%).

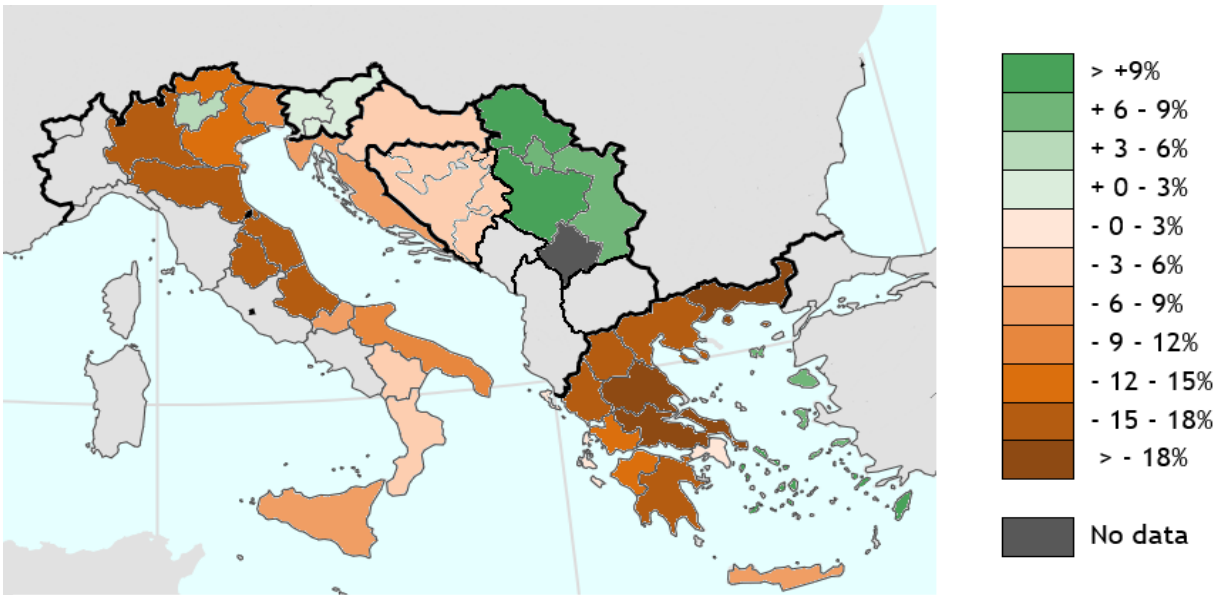
Figure 20 - Variation of the median age in NUTS2 regions 2010-2020



Fertility rate at the NUTS2 regional level

Surely connected with the increase of the old-age dependency ratio is the generalized decrease of the fertility rate (Figure 21). The only regions that have registered an increase of this rate are Serbian and Slovenian regions, the Autonomous Province of Trento and the islands of the Greek regions of Voreio Aigaio and Notio Aigaio. Among the others, the ones that have registered a major decrease are the Greek regions of Sterea Ellada (-26.3%), Thessalia (-20%) and Anatoliki Makedonia (-19.8%). In Italy, the regions that have suffered from major decreases of the fertility rate are Marche and Umbria (both -16.2%) and Lombardia (-15.9%), while southern regions such as Calabria and Basilicata have registered minor decreases, similarly to Croatian and Bosnian territories.

*Figure 21 - Variation of the fertility rate in NUTS2 regions 2010-2019**



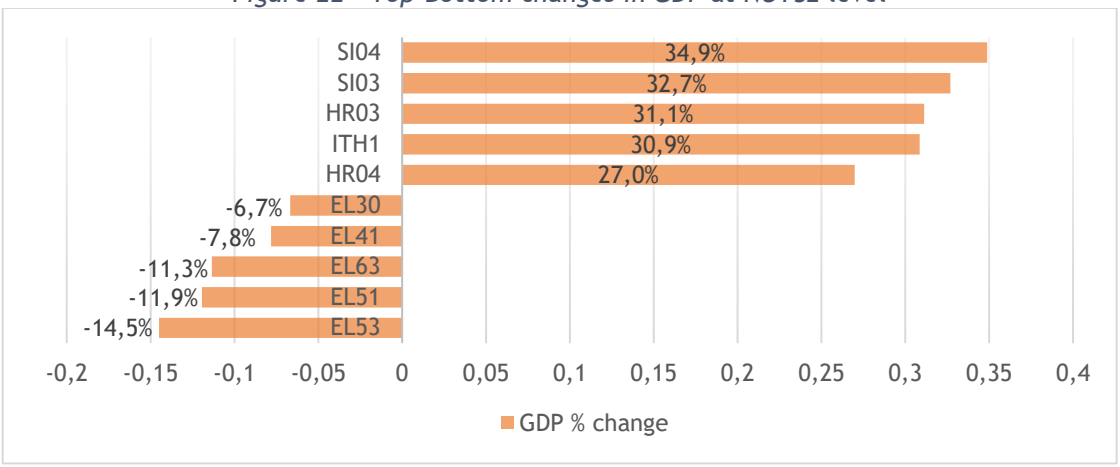
*data on the year 2020 were not available on EUROSTAT database

Economic and innovation performance at NUTS2 level

Evidence from GDP country comparison showed a significant gap in the levels of variation in the time span 2010-2019. Looking at subnational dimension, the analysis reveals further within country disparities, especially for Italy and Greece. In Figure 22 the top five performers include regions from Slovenia and Croatia and the Italian autonomous province of Bolzano (ITH1), while the negative variations in the bottom five refer to Greek regions of Dytiki Makedonia (EL53), Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki (EL51), Dytiki Ellada (EL63), Voreio Aigaio (EL41), Attiki (EL30). Nevertheless, compared with these exceptional cases, three regions in Greece remained almost stable with no growth (between 0,2% and 0,3% in Peloponnisos and Thessalia) or with small increase (2,4% in Notio Aigaio). The same disparities are observable in the overall variations in Italy between southern regions of Molise (-0.4%), Calabria (4.4%) and Sicily (3.9%) and northern regions of Emilia Romagna (22%), Veneto (18%), or Bolzano (31%). Data are not available at NUTS2 level for Bosnia and Herzegovina.[56]

[56] Looking at the two major entities constituting Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2019 the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) accounts for the 65.67% of total GDP while the Republika Srpska (RS) accounts for the 31.88% of total GDP (the remaining 2.45% is imputed to Brčko Distrikt).
For further details see https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Bilteni/2021/NUM_00_2020_TB_1_BS.pdf .

Figure 22 - Top-Bottom changes in GDP at NUTS2 level



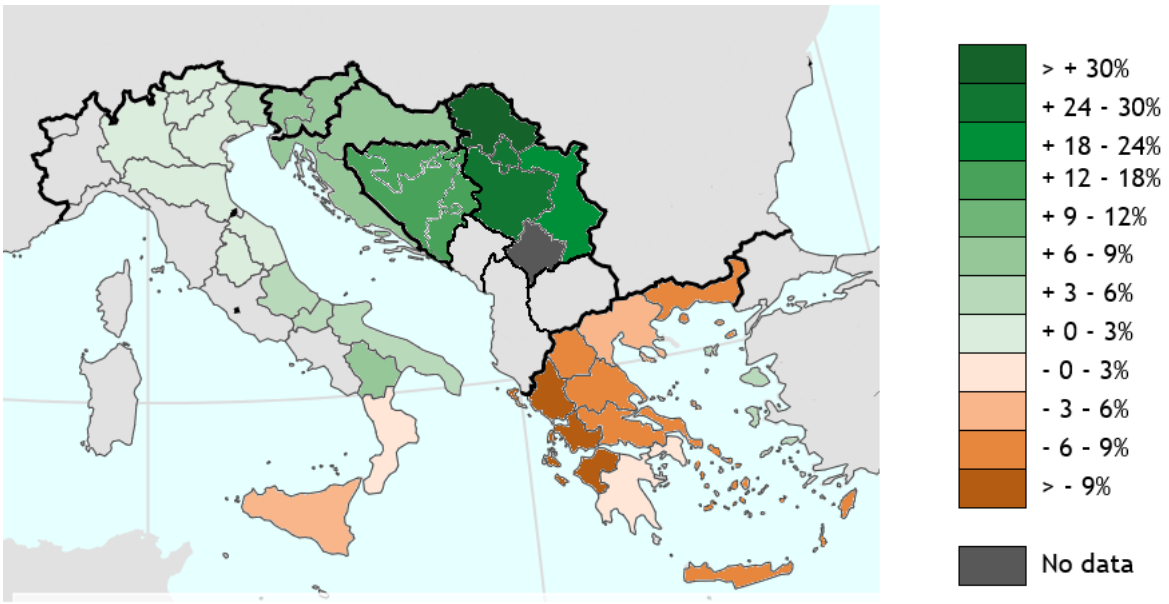
Note: Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices by NUTS2 regions [NAMA_10R_2GDP]. Values expressed in Million purchasing power standards (PPS, EU27 from 2020). Percentage change for Serbia refer to 2012-2019 period.

The dynamics of regional employment in Figure 23 shows different patterns in the growth rates of labour force in the ADRION regions. A generalised increase is observable across all regions in Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, while Italy and Greece are characterised by a regional heterogeneity. The positive variation for Bosnia and Herzegovina refers to country performance as employment data are not available at NUTS2 level.[57] It is worth noting that despite the high growth rate of labour force, the percentage of total employed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (49.7%) remains far below the average.

Figure 24 below confirms the exceptional gains in job creation in Serbia in the top five and the negative trends of Greek regions in the bottom five. In general, Greek regions displays negative employment growth rates, except in the case of Voreio Aigaio (EL41) that gained 4% in the period 2010-2020. Southern Italian regions of Calabria and Sicily also display negative employment growth rates, respectively -2.4% and -4%.

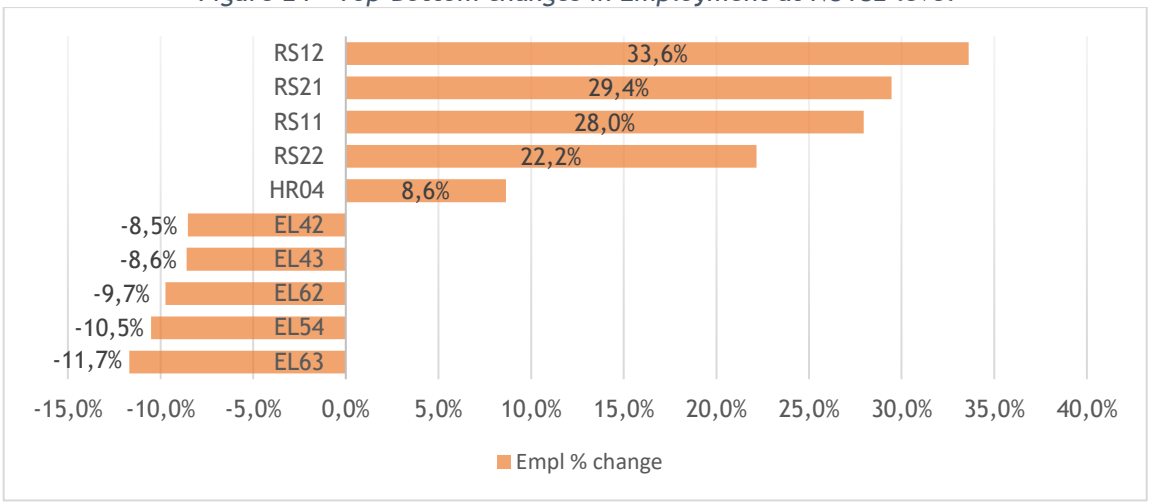
[57] However, looking at the two major entities constituting Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are significant within country disparities. According to the national Agency for Statistics, in 2019 the employment rate was 83% in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and 65.1% in the Republika Srpska (RS). For further details see: https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Bilteni/2021/NUM_00_2020_TB_1_BS.pdf.

Figure 23 - Employment change at NUTS2 level



Notes: Data for Bosnia refers to the employment rate, years 20-64 in the period 2010-2019.

Figure 24 - Top-Bottom changes in Employment at NUTS2 level



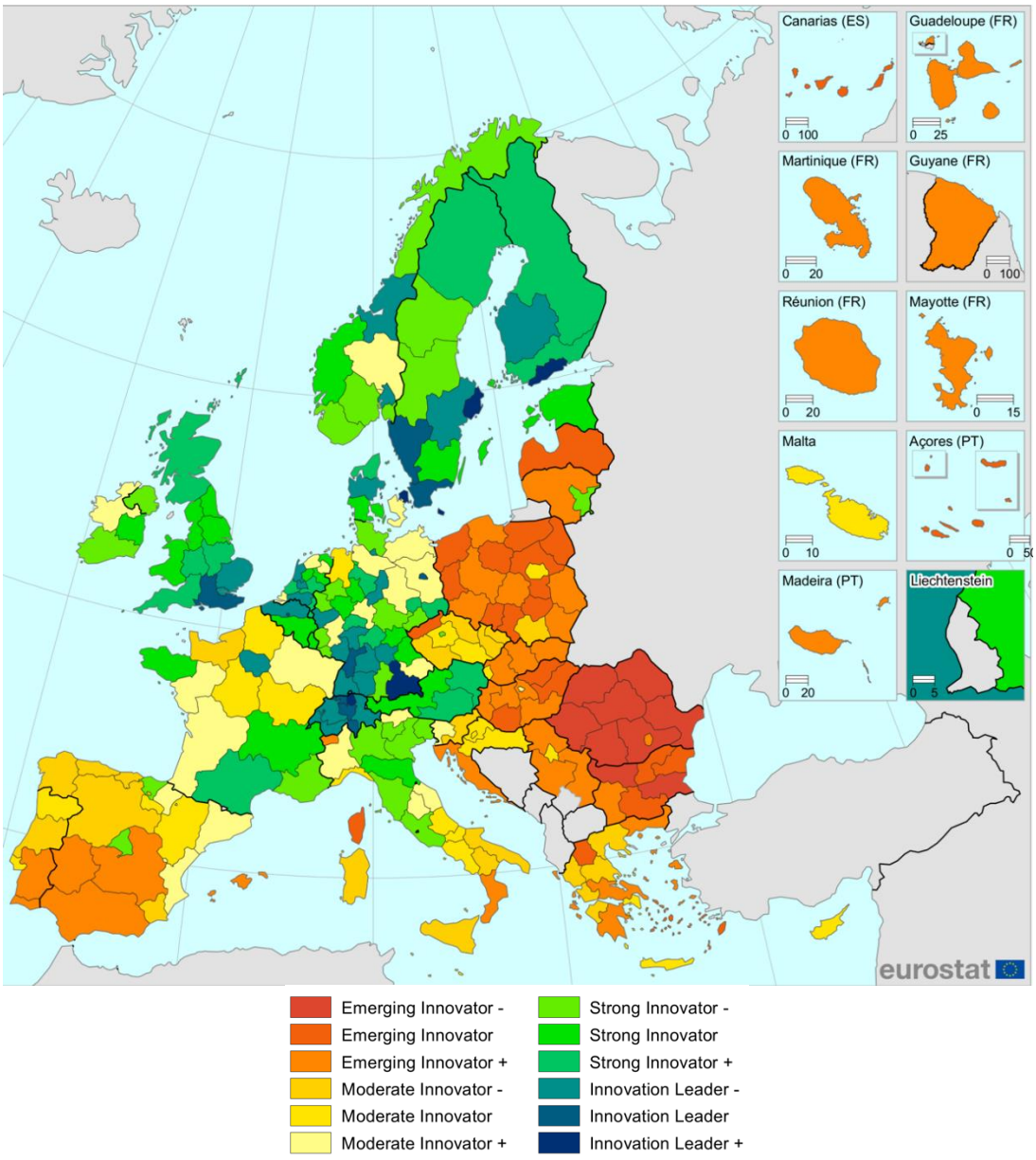
Note: Employment rates by sex, age and NUTS2 regions [LFST_R_LFE2EMPRT]. Percentage of total population 15 to 64 years [Y15-64]. Percentage change for Serbia refer to 2013-2020 period.

Looking at the innovation performance, the regional disaggregation of the European Innovation Scoreboard confirms a significant structural divide across regions of ADRION area, adding interesting evidence compared to the country profiles illustrated in the previous section (Figure 25).[58] In general, a noticeable heterogeneity is observable within the Italian innovation system. Italian regions of ADRION area perform in three

[58] For further details refer to the European Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2021 https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/regional_en ; https://interactivetool.eu/.

different categories of the composite indicator, ranging from "strong innovators" (Emilia-Romagna) to "emerging innovators" (Calabria). No relevant variations arise in Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia. In Greece, moderate variations characterise the performance of regional innovation systems, except for the lowest performance of Dytiki Makedonia. Regional data are not available for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Figure 25 – European Regional innovation Scoreboard 2021



Note: source Eurostat, European Regional Innovation Scoreboard (2021).

In general, Table 7 indicates that the overall performance has increased over time in all ADRION regions. Relative to EU, performance has increased for all regions in Croatia, Italy and Greece, except for Dytiki Makedonia with an increase of 12,2 compared to 14,8 of EU. In Serbia, the change over time in Vojvodina and in Šumadija and Western Serbia are below the EU change, respectively 10,1 and 10,6. Slovenian regions have seen their performance worsen compared to EU, with the lowest changes in ADRION regions. This indicates a general EU convergence process with low-innovative regions catching up with high-innovative regions (on this point, see also the recent findings in the Regional Innovation Scoreboard report 2021).

Table 7 - Performance in European Regional Innovation Scoreboard

		2021 score relative to EU 2014	2021 score relative to EU 2021	Change over time compared to EU in base year 2014	Performance subgroup
EU27	EU27	114,8	100,0	14,8	
EL30	Attiki	99,7	86,9	27,3	Moderate innovator
EL41	Voreio Aigaio	72,8	63,4	26,2	Emerging innovator +
EL42	Notio Aigaio	54,7	47,6	15,6	Emerging innovator
EL43	Kriti	94,3	82,1	24,8	Moderate innovator
EL51	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	64,7	56,4	22,8	Emerging innovator +
EL52	Kentriki Makedonia	89,4	77,8	30,0	Moderate innovator -
EL53	Dytiki Makedonia	56,8	49,5	12,2	Emerging innovator
EL54	Ipeiros	81,6	71,0	36,0	Moderate innovator -
EL61	Thessalia	85,4	74,4	30,8	Moderate innovator -
EL62	Ionia Nisia	69,1	60,2	35,6	Emerging innovator +
EL63	Dytiki Ellada	82,4	71,8	23,9	Moderate innovator -
EL64	Sterea Ellada	71,9	62,6	14,9	Emerging innovator +
EL65	Peloponnisos	67,8	59,0	22,2	Emerging innovator +
HR02	Panonska Hrvatska	92,7	80,8	22,9	Moderate innovator
HR03	Jadranska Hrvatska	71,9	62,6	23,0	Emerging innovator +
HR05	Grad Zagreb	98,9	86,1	26,0	Moderate innovator
HR06	Sjeverna Hrvatska	96,1	83,7	21,4	Moderate innovator
ITC4	Lombardia	117,5	102,3	27,9	Strong innovator -
ITH1	Provincia Autonoma Bolzano	108,9	94,8	23,8	Moderate innovator +
ITH2	Provincia Autonoma Trento	123,0	107,1	29,8	Strong innovator -
ITH3	Veneto	118,0	102,8	29,0	Strong innovator -
ITH4	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	122,5	106,6	25,1	Strong innovator -
ITH5	Emilia-Romagna	125,7	109,4	34,2	Strong innovator
ITI2	Umbria	113,4	98,8	29,2	Moderate innovator +
ITI3	Marche	104,0	90,6	26,6	Moderate innovator +
ITF1	Abruzzo	97,3	84,7	22,7	Moderate innovator
ITF2	Molise	95,2	82,9	26,4	Moderate innovator
ITF4	Puglia	85,1	74,1	21,6	Moderate innovator -

ITF5	Basilicata	91,6	79,7	30,1	Moderate innovator -
ITF6	Calabria	78,3	68,2	20,1	Emerging innovator +
ITG1	Sicilia	80,7	70,3	21,9	Moderate innovator -
SI03	Vzhodna Slovenija	91,6	79,8	4,5	Moderate innovator -
SI04	Zahodna Slovenija	112,7	98,1	5,7	Moderate innovator +
RS11	Belgrade	92,1	80,2	26,2	Moderate innovator
RS12	Vojvodina	66,8	58,2	10,1	Emerging innovator +
RS21	Šumadija and Western Serbia	60,8	52,9	10,6	Emerging innovator +
RS22	Southern and Eastern Serbia	61,5	53,6	16,3	Emerging innovator +

Data gaps

This section clarifies what are the data gaps encountered by the project team during the collection of information for the National Report.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The following statistics were missing:

- Median age;
- Old-age dependency ratio, for the period from 2015 to 2020;
- Employment rate at national level, for the period from 2010 to 2015;
- Number of active companies, per industry was found only for 2018 and 2019.

Regarding the statistics below, the team recognizes that they may be partly available, although with restricted access; however, the team has not managed to obtain access or additional information from sources:

- Number of active companies at regional level;
- Development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the country level;
- Number of incubators/accelerators at regional level;
- Number of active companies owned by foreigners, also at regional level;
- Number of social enterprises, also at regional level;
- Innovation statistics (educational attainment of the labour force; R&D expenditures and personnel by firms; patent applications), also at regional level.

Croatia

In some cases (e.g. total population at regional level) gaps of comparable data were determined by the changes to the country's statistical division (NUTS) in 2016. As a consequence, statistics were not available before that year for the purpose and methodology of the National report. Data gaps were found for the following:

- development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the country level;
- the number of incubators/accelerators at regional level;
- the number of social enterprises, including at regional level;
- innovation statistics, including at regional level.

Greece

Regarding the two first indicators, the data gaps concern the age and the gender distribution of the refugees and asylum seekers, which was not registered. The main data gaps regarding the entrepreneurship indicators are the following:

- The number of active companies is not available for the years 2010, 2019 and 2020. The Hellenic Statistical Authority started monitoring this data in 2011. Data for year 2018 was released in June 2021 and data for the years 2019 and 2020 haven't been released yet;
- The number of active companies owned by foreigners is not available;
- The number of social enterprises is not available for years 2010 and 2011. The terms "social entrepreneur" and "social entrepreneurship" were introduced in legislation in 2011, and an official National Registry of Social Economy was established in 2012;
- The number of incubators is not available and there is no authority/structure in Greece that monitors the activity of incubators/accelerators which are mainly private-held initiatives or structures/ programmes tied to universities, federations and private companies.

Italy

The main data gap encountered in the collection of migration indicators concerned the age and gender of refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR, indeed, does not release data divided according to these two categories for Italy. Other sources have been consulted in order to find data on this regard, but it was not always possible to retrieve statistics fully comparable to UNHCR indicators. This is mostly due to the fact that the population considered in other statistics differ from the one considered by UNHCR. For instance, EUROSTAT releases data on the numbers of immigrants that have entered Italy according to their age and sex, but these consider all foreigners entered in the country, not only refugees and asylum seeker. IOM, on the other side, releases a series of monitoring surveys, but these are based only on studies conducted on a limited number of migrants arrived in Italy by boat.[59] It was then decided to report the data released by the Ministry of Interior on the numbers of asylum applications, divided by sex and age, although these data were available online only for the years 2016-2019.

[59] Displacement Tacking Matrix - IOM, 'Flow Monitoring in Italy in 2016', Flow Monitoring Surveys, December 2016, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/Analysis_Flow_Monitoring_and_Human_Trafficking_Survey_Italy_2016.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2123; Displacement Tacking Matrix - IOM, 'Flow Monitoring Surveys - Italy 2020', Flow Monitoring Surveys, February 2021, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/DTM_FMS_ITA_2020_brief_final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=10767.

Furthermore, the total number of the asylum applications reported by the Ministry of Interior slightly differ from the one reported by UNHCR.

Regarding the economic indicators, except for few cases, no relevant issues arose in the collection of time series data. Information concerning the business support in the form of incubators and accelerators are not available through the official databases, while a common definition of social enterprises across EU countries is still missing, with no data currently available on the distribution of legal entities. Finally, data on patent applications are only available for few years in the time span 2010-2020 and the regional disaggregation is not available for all the indicators in this category.

Serbia

Data gaps concern especially the economic and entrepreneurship indicators. Some of the data required at the regional level were not available for the entire period of interest. For example:

- the employment rate at regional level was missing for years 2010, 2011 and 2012;
- Similarly, it was not possible to find comparable data for the GDP at regional level for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020;
- At both state and sub-state levels, statistics on the number of active companies, per industry were only available from 2017 on.

Data gaps were also found for:

- the number of active companies owned by foreigners, also at regional level;
- the number of social enterprises, also at the regional level.

Slovenia

Some data on UNHCR Data finder were not presented. Additional search was conducted to obtain data. In the Report on the work of the Migration directorate for 2020 some demographic data according to demographic parameters were displayed (however not the same sets of data as in the template). In the document we found also other data that we were collecting for the report (e.g. Asylum applications), but there are discrepancies between UNHCR's and Ministry of interior's data, thus the Directorate was contacted. Additional data were obtained, however, they confirmed the data in the report and do not know why there are discrepancies with the UNHCR data.

The data about active companies owned by foreigners is not collected by any governmental institution. We also didn`t find any reliable data about this topic obtained by published studies, neither in the OECD and EUROSTAT data bases.

Regarding social entrepreneurship data the Case study: Social entrepreneurship: Case of Slovenia[60] point out some Slovenian peculiarities and explains the Slovenian context. Firstly, it points out to the discrepancy in the definitions and the register for statues of social enterprises as the current register is not representative of the actual number of social enterprises by EU operational definition in Slovenia.[61] The registration process is lengthy and discouraging because the administration is not aware of the procedures connected with social enterprise registration. However, the authors point out that, nevertheless, "the legal environment was quite enabling even before the introduction of the 2011 Social Entrepreneurship Act. For example, social enterprises could (and still can) be set up using the legal framework of institute (*zavod)*, company for the disabled, cooperative and NGO."[62], but the policy makers have a different view on the matter.[63] In any case, "the concept of social enterprises is new and, therefore, statistics are scarce. Whereas statistics on the number of registered social enterprises and the number of registered companies for the disabled are available for recent years, there is not any recent statistics on the structure of the Slovenian NGOs sector and associations which would enable estimating the number of those entities falling within the EU definition of social enterprises. As stated in EC report,[64] it is for instance estimated that in 2009-2010 the share of employees in social economy in Slovenia presented 0.73 per cent of all employees. But the notion of social economy falls beyond social enterprises. However, it is estimated that Slovenia has around 900 organizations, which potentially fulfil the criteria laid out by the EU definition"[65], following a European Commission report in social entrepreneurship.

In 2016,[66] 62 recognized refugees (10 female, 52 male) and 13 beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (all male) were employed (based on data from Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants). In the last round of updating integration mechanisms, however, Peace Institute was informed that the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants does not keep data on the beneficiaries' documented employment and self-employment. They noted, however, that they

[60] Tomaževič, Nina and Aristovnik, Aleksander (2018): Case study: Social entrepeneurhip: Case of Slovenia, see: Zavod14.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Social-Entrepreneurship_Case-of-Slovenia.pdf.
[61] Based on the opinion of some main experts in the field there are few possible explanations on why this is the case; the lack of financial incentives, the lack of tax incentives and high administrative burden caused by high reporting duties. (Tomaževič and Aristovnik 2018, p. 42).
[62] Ibid. p 42.
[63] Citing the European Commission, the author mention that "the policy makers" view "that low number of registration could mean that the organisations are not social enterprises, or they lack knowledge to recognize their operation as a social purpose, or they fail to see registration could help them position themselves on the market" (Ibid. p. 42).
[64] EC (European Commission). (2014). A map of social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe. Http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2149&furtherNews=yes.
[65] Ibid p. 43.
[66] Https://www.google.si/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwidnN33ypHwAhUNwQIHHVrPA0cQFjAFegQICxAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.forintegration.eu%2Fpl%2Fpub%2Fnational-reports-2020%2Fdnl%2F56&usg=AOvVaw11voOSkjcIvteKPQ4Ajn61.

assume 122 were employed in June 2019. On the national level in Slovenia, data are missing also on employability of refugees and asylum seekers, since the Employment service of Slovenia does not collect this data. In this case, it is due to protection of personal data, since in general they are not allowed to collect any data other than on the persons registered at the Employment Service as unemployed. Once a person becomes employed, the Employment Service can no longer keep track of that person (which means they have no data about the type of employment, the contract, etc.). The Employment Service only has contacts with those beneficiaries of international protection who are registered as unemployed, but no general data on beneficiaries. They also do not have any data on specific vocational trainings or education for better employment opportunities devoted specifically to beneficiaries of international protection.

Policy recommendations

In the light of the multi-sectorial analysis carried out in this Comparative Report, the team has elaborated a list of policy recommendations that embrace the entire ADRION area. We recognize that these points, which will be further taken into consideration in the next REInSER activities, provide important insights for innovating governance and stimulate further transnational cooperation initiatives.

1. Fast communication on crucial matters and improved access to health systems should be ensured in order to guarantee both the principle of non-discriminatory access, upheld by all ADRION countries, and also the wellbeing of the entire resident population. Covid-19 has certainly brought new challenges to ADRION countries. From the point of view of migration in general, the evidence we collected indicates that refugees and migrants have not always received prompt and comprehensive information about the virus and the measures to contain it. Further issues have emerged from the limited access to tests and the difficulties to respect social distance within reception centres, especially in those countries with higher numbers of new arrivals. While some of these issues have been partly addressed by governments during the pandemic, not all challenges caused by Covid-19 have been tackled properly.
2. An effective application of the right to asylum in the Western Balkans requires states to go through a simplification of the procedures and the enforcement of the integration structures and services. The data on asylum applications and decisions in the Western Balkans countries suggest in fact that a high number of asylum applicants have left the countries where they applied for asylum before a decision

was taken. As highlighted by previous works[67], the high drop-out in this region is probably due to the complexity of the asylum procedures, the lack of substantial integration policies and the limited economic opportunities.

3. A general debate on socio-demographic change is timely and needed and should be promoted at both state and ADRION level, to reflect on forthcoming challenges and solutions to ensure the sustainability and the wellbeing of ADRION societies. During the last decade, indeed, the ADRION area has experienced a convergence in the trends related to socio-demographic changes, suggesting how depopulation and ageing will be more and more significant in defining the societal dynamics in the next decade.
4. In connection to the above and in light of the territorial disparities and inequalities emerged from the maps and tables included in this report, our recommendation is to make wise use of this evidence to design policies and to implement projects that can help dealing with such developments. While a thorough territorial analysis was not among the aims of this report, it is nevertheless possible to refer to our findings to stress that some areas (sub-state levels) are more concerned than others by societal transformation. This is in line with a wide literature suggesting that opportunities and wealth are accumulating in few places, usually big cities, while rural and remote areas are quickly losing economic appeal and deteriorating their economic performance.
5. Further quantitative analysis on the structural factors hindering the process of socio-economic convergence of ADRION countries is highly recommended. Despite the encouraging signs in reducing the gap in many indicators, disparities in the level of development remains high.
6. A closer look to the sub-national dimension should be a priority in the implementation of development policy especially in Italy and Greece: one size does not fit all. The regional analysis confirms that lagging behind regions play an important role in driving the country disparities and greater attention is needed in designing and implementing territorial policies.
7. The common management of societal issues can become an important factor pushing towards an acceleration of the process of integration in the EU of ADRION candidates and potential candidates. The migration, socio-demographic and economic evolution highlighted in this report can serve for the development of policies aimed at reinforcing the cooperation between EU Member States and the Western Balkans,

[67] Nidžara Ahmetašević, 'Limits to Access to Asylum along the Balkan Route' (Refugee Rights Europe, 2021), https://refugee-rights.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RRE_LimitedAccessToAsylumAlongTheBalkanRoute.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0As3SQjV__m3hGZsajCjZodp9r4DCOZlyh3950FI-xJ9naloY1lNZFaRU; Neža Kogovšek Šalamon, 'Asylum Systems in the Western Balkan Countries: Current Issues', *International Migration* 54, no. 6 (December 2016): 151–63, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12273.

essential to face the new challenges posed by the post-pandemic transition and the migratory phenomenon.

8. A systematic collection of data should be started. There are still important data gaps preventing better research and policy design, with differences among ADRION states. Economic statistics are the ones suffering the most from missing information and require special attention by national statistical offices and EUROSTAT. Several data in the field of (social) entrepreneurship and economic development are not systematically gathered: in order to get better insight into this economic field systematic collection of data should be established. In most countries, we reported also that there is insufficient data on employment of refugees and asylum seekers in Slovenia. Having more information would serve as a basis for further measures aimed at their employment. The project team cannot stress enough the importance of having complete and updated statistics for elaborating useful background analysis of the societies, the region, and the target group of this research. For this purpose, this report has included a specific section on data gaps.