Conditions of policy formation and policy implementation affecting integration of new female immigrants in the Republic of Cyprus

Nikos Trimikliniotis, Mihaela Fulias-Souroulla

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Intercollege Cyprus
46, Makedonitissas, Ave., P.O. Box 24005, 1700 Nicosia, Cyprus
e-mail: nicostrim@logosnet.cy.net
Contents

Introduction........................................................................................................................................3

1. Key informant interviews: research methodology.................................................................4
   1.1 Theoretical sampling and qualitative interviewing.........................................................4
   1.2 Qualitative data analysis of the interview transcripts.............................................................6

2. Main issues regarding categories of female immigrants as target groups
   of immigration and integration policies....................................................................7
   2.1 Definitions of immigrants-Categories of immigrants.................................................7
   2.2 The phenomenon of cabaret-type venues in Cyprus......................................................18

3. Immigration and integration: country specificities.............................................................22
   3.1 Integration: meanings and conditions..........................................................................22
   3.2 Articulation of gender, ethnicity and class.................................................................25
   3.3 Mainstream NGOs and self-help associations of female migrants.............................26
   3.4 Links between European and national policies on immigration:
       immigration-related EU directives..............................................................................29

4. Concluding summary ............................................................................................................31

Appendix......................................................................................................................................34

References.......................................................................................................................................38
Introduction

The key informant interviews conducted in the Cypriot context have provided information on structural conditions, the construction of meaning, and processes relating to the integration of female migrants in the labour market and society. According to an EU annual report on migration and integration, “given the low number of long-term immigrants and recognised refugees, the Republic of Cyprus has not yet adopted an integration policy. This will be addressed in the new bill on Aliens and Immigration currently under discussion among Government department”. As a result, for the purpose of this project, the concept of interviewing key informants has been adapted to the national specificities and national discourses. These emphasise the overall invisibility of immigration and integration issues at societal and state levels. This is why we have mapped out issues concerning the following: categories of immigrant women, immigration policies, societal conditions of integration and meanings of integration as expressed in public discourses.

With regard to the research methods employed in the phase of interviewing key informants, theoretical sampling and qualitative interviewing have been employed. An ethnographic approach and the narrative method specifically, constitute the methodological framework of the empirical investigation.

In order to cover the main areas of policy formation and implementation related to immigration to Cyprus, eight participants were interviewed. The sample includes individuals with knowledge of specific fields, as well as representatives of state and local organisations. A mixed methodological strategy was used for the interviews, combining semi-structured interviewing (in two cases) and unstructured interviewing (in six cases). We utilized grounded theory as the strategy for both data collection and analysis.

The main findings from the key informants interviews are presented in the section summarising country specificities. The findings also identify key issues in relation to main developments and problems of implementation regarding immigration and integration related policies.

Motto:
“Migration policies in Cyprus run after their tails to catch up with different EU directives because nothing is updated”.
“There has never been a comprehensive approach and planning for facing migration matters in Cyprus”.

Key informants

1. Key Informant Interviews: research methodology

1.1 Theoretical sampling and qualitative interviewing

In choosing a sampling method, we aimed at ensuring that access is gained to as wide a range of individuals relevant to the research question as possible, to allow the exploration of a range of perspectives and activities. In this sense, the strategy employed is theoretical sampling advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Sample of Interviewees. We included in our sample individuals with knowledge of the field, as well as representatives of organisations, in order to cover several areas of policy formation and policy implementation related to immigration in Cyprus. Therefore, the sample of key informants includes:

- Informant 1: A police officer in the Immigration Service
- Informant 2: Coordinator of women’s shelter of victims of violence.
- Informant 3: Officer in Governmental Authority dealing with discrimination.
- Informant 4: A Filipina woman a church association for domestic workers of different nationalities.
- Informant 5: Author of a book on cabaret-type venues in the Republic of Cyprus.
- Informant 7: A former doctor’s assistant in a private gynaecological clinic that has numerous migrant women cabaret workers as clients.
- Informant 8: A Pontian trade unionist woman.

Although we envisaged including in the sample churches as well as organisations that defend the dominant idea of integration at state and European levels, we did not manage to achieve finding interviewees from these categories. Moreover, there were no identifiable representatives of any international organisations dealing with migration in Cyprus (such as the IOM). This fact reinforces the empirical observation about the underdevelopment of civil society in Cyprus and its lack of involvement in relation to immigration issues.

In relation to different demographic characteristics, our sample of key informants includes three men and five women, two independent individuals and six representatives of different organisations, three migrants and five nationals. They were contacted by telephone in order to make appointments and establish a first contact to inform them about the topics to be addressed in the interviews. Generally, only one phone call was sufficient for the informants to agree to being interviewed. In only one case the interview took place twice with the same respondent (I 2) and in one case the respondent could not come for face-to-face interviewing for medical reasons, and hence the interview was conducted over the phone (I 8). The duration of interviews oscillated between one and two hours, with the exception of the phone interview, where the conversation lasted less than one hour.

Three of the interviewees did not want their real names to be disclosed. In each case consent was asked for tape-recording the interviews. All the interviews were tape-recorded, translated into English and transcribed by the interviewer. The languages of the interviews were English in one case (I 4) and Greek for the rest seven cases. The interviewing period lasted from 26th of May 2006 to 26th of June 2006.

Qualitative interviewing

We used qualitative interviewing techniques for the key informant interviews. For some writers, this term seems to denote an unstructured interview (e.g. Mason 1996), but more
frequently it is a general term that embraces interviews of both *semi-structured* and unstructured kinds (e.g. Rubin and Rubin 1995).

*The semi-structured format* was employed in two cases, when interviewing a representative of women’s NGO (I 2) and a representative of a migrants’ self-help association (I 4). In these cases we used a series of questions grouped in the general form of an interview schedule. We also asked further questions in response to what we considered as significant replies. The following thematic areas were used as a guide:

- Characteristics of the organisation: goals, history, activity, cooperation with other organisations, migrants and migrant women involved in the organisation.
- Position of female migrants in the activities of the organisation: target groups, problem awareness, and policy proposals in relation to improving the situation of female migrants.
- (Self-) evaluation of the organisation: results, difficulties, obstacles encountered at different levels.
- Position of the informant in the organisation: sector of work, occupational history, prior work, plans.

*Unstructured interviewing.* We did not use an interview schedule with pre-established questions for all respondents. Instead, we designed an interview guide or *aide memoire* (Bryman 2001:110) containing a list of topics. The phrasing and sequencing of the questions varied from interview to interview. In other words, the questions were adapted to the circumstances specific to each case, and grouped around main themes concerning migration policy making and policy implementing, such as:

- Categories of immigrants and categories of female immigrant in Cyprus, their sector of employment and specific problems;
- Residence and employment regimes for different categories of migrants, according to the divide EU country citizens-non-EU country citizens; entry-visa requirements and procedures.
- Articulation of gender, class and ethnicity. Migrant women and specificities of ethnic origin.

*Policy evaluation.* This set of questions addresses topics regarding migration and integration policy evaluation:

- The institutional framework in which policy materialises.
- Authorities responsible for the implementation of specific EU policies addressing migrants (e.g. the Commissioner for Administration in Cyprus has duties of supervising the integration of migrants in Cypriot society).
- Selection structures not explicated in the policy objectives (latent inclusion vs exclusion criteria).
- The impact of integration policies on female migrants.
- Migration policies related to gender mainstreaming policies.
- The goals of policy and awareness of problems in relation to policy and its implementation.
- Policies targeted at social exclusion.
- Views on the situation of irregular migrants and those employed in the informal sector.
- Perspectives and suggestions for the improvement of existing policy.

*EU legislation and directives.* This set of questions concerned policy making in relation to EU legislation and directives:
Meanings of the European citizenship.
Integration of the concept of European citizenship in national legislation.
The relationship between European and national legislations.
Impact of European legislation on immigrants.
Distance between EU directives and national laws aiming to incorporate migrants.
The importance of the EU legislation for the integration of female immigrants.

Integration. Questions concerning the integration of female immigrants and the notion of integration itself referred to the following aspects:
-Key informants’ common sense understandings of integration.
-Indicators of integration: residence, employment and rights, insurance, language, political and social rights.
-Categories of migrants regarded as target groups for integration processes.
-Distinctions between the different levels of integration such as cultural, social and structural.

1.2 Qualitative data analysis of the interview transcripts

We followed three phases in analysing the data from interviews:
Phase 1: Coding- Conceptualisation. This is the key process in grounded theory, in which data was broken down into component parts that were given thematic labels. The result was an index of terms that helped to interpret and theorize the data. This process began soon after the collection of initial data. We aimed at identifying in vivo codes (Strauss 1987) for each national case. These codes derived from the language used by the people in the social context studied, rather than sociologically constructed codes. The main steps followed during the coding process were: transcription which began at a relatively early stage; reading through data and making notes about significant remarks or observations; reviewing codes in relation to transcripts by searching for connections between the codes.

Phase 2: Theoretical saturation. This relates to two phases in grounded theory: firstly the coding of data (implying that we reached a point where there was no scope to review further the data as the categories were well developed); and secondly the collection of data (implying that, once a concept or category has been developed, we continued collecting data to determine its nature and operation, but then reached a point where further data no longer illuminated the concept).

Phase 3: Constant comparison. This refers to the process of maintaining a close connection between data and conceptualisation. We aimed at comparing phenomena being coded under a certain category so that we could begin to see a theoretical elaboration of that category. In this sense, Glaser and Strauss (1967) advice writing a memo on the category after several phenomena have been coded. This also entails being sensitive to contrasts between the categories emerging (Bryman, 2001:394).

We have constructed memos for categories concerning the eight national cases of key informant interviews. Interconnections between concepts and categories were outlined, some of them being identified as dimensions of broader phenomena. Four dimensions emerged from the data analysis. The dimensions and their corresponding categories are enumerated in the Appendix.

The key informants have been of great help to the research, especially in overcoming certain barriers in accessing the field (particularly cases related to the sex industry and trafficking
practices). However, we need to be aware of the risks of developing an undue reliance on the key informants, and the danger of seeing social reality through the eyes of the key informants rather than through the eyes of members of the social setting.

2. Main issues regarding categories of female immigrants as target groups of immigration and integration policies

The information obtained through interviewing key informants in areas of migration and integration policy formation and implementation have offered a complex and multi-faced empirical picture of the shifting aspects embedded in the migration domain. We focus our presentation of qualitative findings on issues concerning the main developments of the migration-related processes discussed in key informants’ narratives. Moreover, our presentation of the findings encompasses problems regarding immigration and integration policy formation and implementation.

We have structured the interviews conceptual outcomes around four central topics of the immigration phenomenon in Cyprus, as resulted from the qualitative data. The topics are as follows:

- Definitions of immigrants - Categories of immigrants;
- The phenomenon of cabaret-type venues in Cyprus: past manifestations and present realities;
- Mainstream NGOs for migrants and self-help associations by migrants;
- Immigration policy. The Immigration law.

We identified for each of these four topics several categories and their corresponding indicators presented in the following sections.

2.1 Definitions of immigrants. Categories of immigrants

The main category of immigrants in Cyprus consists of migrant workers who “come for a limited period of time (usually for 4 or 6 years) and work in agricultural sectors and tourism. The largest categories are the domestic workers, the asylum seekers and also the girls coming to work in the cabaret industry” (I 3). Immigration of workers to Cyprus matches the characteristics of the guest-worker system, with immigrant labour undergoing official recruitment on the basis of a strict system of quotas on work visas, to be allocated to specific sectors of employment and employers. In fact, immigration to Cyprus started in the nineties, with guest workers being allowed to enter the country due to demand for labour in the Cypriot economy, but concomitantly, under the pressure of constraints imposed by trade unions. Partly because of the temporary dimension of their stay in Cyprus, migrant workers have never been considered as settlers in the country (I 5). In this sense, another key informant refers to female migrant workers: “We do not consider as migrants the women coming to Cyprus for work. They come to Cyprus on a work visa” (I 1). Moreover, “up till now that we have had these Filipino and Sri Lankan people, we do not consider them to be immigrants because they come to Cyprus for work (accentuated). Their work contract is for a limited period of time, usually of four years, they work until their permit expires and afterwards they leave...they are not going to settle down in Cyprus. We do not consider that their purpose is to stay in Cyprus. They are here to work for a certain period of time, to finish off work and then go back home” (I 1).
Before the accession of Cyprus to the EU, being a migrant worker in Cyprus used to mean being a non-Westerner or third country national, either from Eastern Europe or from a Third world country. This meaning has begun to broaden up when Cyprus became an EU member state, and new EU member state citizens have started migrating to Cyprus for work. Nowadays, EU country citizens together with EU accession country citizens are given priority. They come to replace third country nationals who have come on an entry-visa with a limited period of stay and conditions of employment. The number of third country nationals in Cyprus is diminishing: “For example, the domestic workers who until now used to be Asian women from Philippines, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries are not coming anymore because of the EU. We made cuts on their visas in order not to come anymore. Now, mostly EU and accession countries citizens are coming, like Bulgarian and Romanian citizens” (I 1).

The Filipina key informant also illustrates this phenomenon mentioning that only Filipina female domestic workers are allowed to come for employment in Cyprus and no Filipino men anymore: “it is difficult to bring men from the Philippines and to hire them in Cyprus. It is difficult for men to find work here. They used to have works like KFC or Pizza Hut, but now totally Asians they are stopped to come in. They give priority to Europeans, so that they stopped hiring Asians- who used to come, but now because of the Europeans they stay until their contract finishes and no others are let to come in. They give priority to those Europeans who are very close and very in need, as well”(I 4).

Two main conceptual constructions on the topic defining and categorising immigrants have emerged from the key informant interviews: the recent phenomenon of immigration to Cyprus, and the categorisation of immigrants according to the criterion settler-non-settler. The latter distinguishes between: the ‘old’ foreign workers who are third country nationals on an entry-visa regime with limited stay and employment terms; the ‘new’ migrant workers who are EU new member states nationals and EU accession country nationals with either less or no limitations on residence and employment terms; and finally, the ‘real’ immigrants or ‘old’ EU country citizens who are Pontian Greeks with Greek citizenship and British citizens: “When we speak about immigrants in Cyprus we mainly take into consideration the Pontian Greeks who make up the largest group of immigrants. There are also the British persons who reside permanently in Cyprus. But you know, being an English person is something else, is not like...you know” (I 3).

2.1.1 Categories of immigrants and corresponding legal papers and procedures. The categories of immigrants in Cyprus enjoy different entrance, residence and employment regulations, translated into various procedures of obtaining visas, residence permits and work permits. The differentiation of residence permits on categories of migrants (I 1) and the relationship duration of stay-citizenship rights (I 1) were identified as factors that could limit the effect of possible integration policies.

The maximum duration of stay for non-EU citizens has been shortened from six to four years after Cyprus became a member state in the EU. If someone stays longer than this limit period of six years, they can enjoy more rights, fact that is regarded as a ‘problem’: “If one stays longer, she/he acquires rights...and is entitled to citizenship... (smiles) and we’ll have a problem here...” (I 1).

The EU and EEA country citizens enjoy full rights concerning residence and work permits. The EU accession country nationals enjoy a partially restrictive residence regime, conditioned by finding employment for a period longer than three months (I 1).

There are also categories of non-EU country citizens without entrance visa conditions because of bilateral governmental agreements (I 1). The most restrictive regime regulates procedures for third country citizens with an entrance visa; restrictions include the conditions of the work
contract; the situation of strict dependency of employee on the employer; and entry limitations. Moreover, a special category of third country nationals is composed by cabaret workers entering the country with a three month ‘artistes’ visa (I 1). Therefore, any migrants’ integration policy have to reflect - to a certain extent - this hierarchy of access to employment, as this area is of a major importance in relation to the integration processes.

2.1.2. Categories of migrant women. General considerations. The key informants identified the following categories/groups according to the sector of work: domestic workers (the largest group); women in sex industry, i.e. working in cabarets as ‘artistes’, entertainment centres, pubs and bars as barmmaids or waitresses; women employed in other tertiary sectors, such as: nurses, sale assistants, waitresses in restaurants, and cleaners in hotels; and shuttle migration of women working in agriculture. Besides, three more categories were mentioned: ‘illegal’/undocumented migrant women; refugees and asylum seekers; Pontian Greek women.

Interviews have furthermore identified the following characteristics corresponding to these categories of migrant women: non-unionised working migrant women, and consequences such as the inability to claim rights, very bad conditions of work and overall social powerlessness; problems concerning legal status, employment, domestic violence and trafficking; the importance of the educational level and the country of origin in processes of migration. In these sense, some women coming to work in cabarets are described as more prone to becoming victims of trafficking because many of them originate from small and isolated villages and therefore have less education and social skills to help them adjust to new social circumstances (I 5).

According to other key informants, there are also educated migrant women working in low-skilled and unskilled jobs, such as domestic work (I 4).

When specifically referring to domestic workers and women working in the sex industry, another respondent said: “these are two large categories of women who live under very bad conditions; they are also the most exploited categories” (I 3).

Respondents also mentioned the ‘well-known problems’ (I 3) of these categories and said that only in the last two years some measures have been taken in this sense: “there is increased pressure to solve these problems; until two years ago, basically nothing existed, so that only in the last two years we understand that something happens” (I 3).

2.1.3. Domestic workers. Key informants provided extensive information on issues concerning this category.

Salary. Domestic work in Cyprus is not attractive for EU country nationals because of the low salary. Due to Cyprus membership in the EU, Asian women who until now used to come in great numbers from the Philippines and Sri Lanka are not given priority anymore. Instead, mostly EU and EU accession country citizens come, such as Bulgarians and Romanians. Provided the fact that the latter are not attracted by the domain of domestic work because of low pay and the policy aim is to limit the number of third country domestics, it is expected that social problems will arise. This is due to the inexistence of a structure (i.e. social welfare services) providing care for categories such as small children and old people (I 1, I 6). “It is true that the salaries and the working hours of these women are not attractive for Europeans. This is why a serious social problem will appear because the role of a large number of domestic helpers has to do with care provided to old people and small children. In Cyprus there is no structure to provide care to these categories. Due to this, many families can keep their old members at home without this to constitute a burden for the family and without any large expenses in this sense. If this possibility would stop to exist, then the most probable we will have such phenomena as the isolation of the old people in competent centre. And this is not the best. (...) The same is true for small children” (I 6).
A way to attract EU nationals in the domestic work sector could be a significant increase in the remuneration. However, because it would be impossible for many families to afford paying a live-in domestic worker, no significant changes are planned in this sense (I 6). The wage of domestic workers is established through administrative acts, and therefore it is not a result of collective agreements. Because of factors related to the specificity of their work place, they have difficulties in organising themselves and vindicating rights (I 3).

On the other hand, domestic workers have expectations in relation to formal and informal increases in their salaries. Some employers have raised their domestic’s salaries because they are satisfied with the way employees respond to their job responsibilities: “Honestly, I have to say that some employers, they are increasing domestic’s salaries and this is because they are in good terms. For example me, they raised me the salary because I’ve been here for a long time. And those employers raise the salaries of the employees because it’s been a long time, let’s say three years and they saw how loyal are the girls with them and they see that their work is good, treat good, so they raise salaries, as well” (I 4).

Complaints of domestic workers about their employers: work contract violations (e.g. when they are not allowed to have the annual leave or not being paid for the period of leave (whilst they are entitled to), bad treatment and sexual harassment. Other complaints include the fact that there are not enough places for entertainment and social interaction for live-in domestic workers. In this sense, groups of live-in domestics rent flats for Sunday’s gatherings and they understand it/make sense of it as a way to contribute to the local economy. Moreover, as mentioned by the Filipina key informant, half of their salary is paid as expenses in Cyprus (such as for renting flats) and the other half is sent as remittances to the Philippines: “Every Sunday off we do not go to the park, we rent a flat and of course, we pay the rent for the flat, pay electric and water bills and that’s why we really have a contribution in this island. We are not just domestics who earn money and send everything home. Mostly, our money like 50% we send to the Philippines and 50% we spend here, especially those who are renting flats and everyone from us is contributing with money. For example, if the flat is 200 or 300 pounds- now it increased, is 400 pounds (approx. 700 euro)- we all contribute with money like 10 pounds each. The employers don’t pay us for it; it’s our own, because it’s our day off. All of us, domestics here, either Filipina or Sri-Lankan domestics are renting flats because where should we go? There is no park, a real place to go and stay: unlike in our country where there are places to go, that’s why we don’t have any choice only to rent a flat. And this is our expenses because we pay for it from our salaries” (I 4).

Social isolation and decision to run away. Some domestic workers who live in rural areas are socially isolated and do not have the possibility to socialise with other domestics. Sometimes they are contacted by self-help associations that find out about them through word of mouth. They try to help domestics in such situations by providing them with advice. A lot of the time, isolation causes psychological problems and decision to runaway: “throughout mobile phones, somehow we can reach them and advice them, by sending messages, we do that. The only thing for them is that they are really in a difficult situation and cannot talk to someone, especially if they don’t have credit in their phone; they stop thinking, and have psychological problems. I had this kind of cases: because of the isolation, because of the treatment, that’s why I say that sometimes they are forced to run away. Mostly, those running away are from villages because they couldn’t anymore, like they are ready to explode, there will be explosions in their minds” (I 4).

Those who have in fact run away are usually hosted by church self-help associations of domestic workers (I 4).
Employers of domestic workers. A number of issues have arisen in interviews concerning negative behaviour by employers. These include: (a) negative attitudes towards their domestic workers’ membership in self-help associations: “there is also a difficulty here because they are not free, like for example if the employer finds out and says ‘why are you member in that association?’ This is why the domestic helpers are afraid because their employers think that we could be a problem but we don’t want to create problems here, we want to do peace in this island. The only thing we want is to fight our rights; that’s all” (I 4); (b) expecting newcomer domestic workers to know how to respond to job requirements and not helping them adjusting to their new work environment: “But sometimes, they don’t have any patience, in just one month they expect that the girl, she knows everything and sometimes, if she lives in the village, they have different things, like for washing- of course, we have in the Philippines also, but there are different models here- and the employers protest ‘You don’t know this, which planet you have been’, so these things happen and some employers they don’t have patience, because they don’t have time to teach the girls. They expect that when they come here, the girls are perfect. When they come here, the girls need guidance, to show them things, at least one month so they can adjust”(I 4); (c) domestic workers being badly treated especially by wealthy employers: “some employers are not patient and if they are rich they usually say ‘I’ll send her back and take another girl’. It’s easy for them because they have money, but difficult for us”(I 4); (d) employers who do not like their domestics make up stories about them in order to get rid of them, without mediation of third parties: “This is what really hurts and we are looking for someone to fight us for that. There are many things happening, sometimes maybe it’s true because sometimes they steal, yes, but sometimes it is not true and they are making up a story, especially if they don’t like the girls. This is the difficult thing because the employer won’t ask us to mediate, to see if she really did it, no, they go directly to the police and lock the girls there. And they don’t have the chance to defend their selves. The police, they don’t believe the girls, beat them saying <you are a liar>. And even if the girl says <I didn’t steal that> and she is saying the truth, they won’t believe her because this is how they look on us. These type of difficulties we encounter everyday”(I 4). Therefore, in many of these cases, domestic workers do not get any support from the police because of a generalised negative social perception of domestic work combined with negative stereotypes and prejudices. (e) There are also employers who do not want to provide their domestic workers with a release paper. (f) Moreover, employment agents are interested in replacing domestic helpers in order to get more money from employers: “even the agents in the Philippines who send the girls here, they have not been on the girls’ side and are still not; the reason is that if a girl is deported they are supposed to send another girl instead and then get more money, so take other girl and other money. And this is true also for the agencies here. (...) And if is something wrong with the employee, the agent will not help, they don’t help much. So far, from what I know, girls are taken by agency and they say ‘we will send her back’ and the reason is that, how they say <the employer doesn’t like you>. And then, they tell the employer ‘I will give you another girl’ and they take also more money for this” (I 4).

The relationship employer-domestic employee is characterized by difficulties in the adjustment of domestic workers because of the following factors: the English language abilities of employer or/and employee, the difficult process of adapting to job requirements because of the deskilling experienced by professional women working as domestics, and the lack of patience and willingness to cooperate from the employers’ side. Self-help church associations provide assistance to newcomer domestic workers in how to deal with this kind of relationship, and generally advice on the process of adjustment to job requirements, trying to prevent phenomena such as running away from employers: “if employers have problems with their employees they call me- because they know me since it has been a long time we have had this- and I will ask them <Madam, give us a second chance, I will talk to the girl>,

11
because sometimes the decisions of employers are to send back girls to the Philippines and the girls have a lot of expenses from the agencies. You know how much they pay to be able to come here? It’s around 1200 pounds per person (about 2000 euros) just to pay the agent in the Philippines. This is only to find work here. It is a lot, but this is what the agent there asks and what we do is that if we don’t have money we have to mortgage our houses, our properties, or to loan some money to be able to come and sometimes if the employers cannot work together with the girls, they want to send them back and it’s a pity for the girls. This is why, there we will be in the middle and try to bring peace, to encourage employer to give her another chance, either to talk to her and employer says <okay, I’ll do that>” (I 4).

The Filipina key informant (I 4) talked about a positive relationship between attending training courses in the countries of origin and the successful adjustment to job responsibilities. She explained how those domestic workers attending training courses in their countries learn about the necessity of emotional investment in work when providing care to people.

Deskilling and downward social mobility is experienced by Filipina women migrating to work as domestics. Sometimes they are in fact misinformed and previously told that they would work as nurses in clinics, and actually they work as live-in domestics. In other cases, the place where Filipina women would work is specified in their work contract (I 4).

2.1.4. Cabaret workers or “artistes”. The word “artistes” constitutes a euphemism for sex workers in Cyprus. The ‘artistes’ work in cabaret-type night clubs where they are supposed to present only ‘shows’. However, this is just a pretext, as the main reason they are brought to work in cabarets is masked prostitution, accompanied by the consumption of alcoholic drinks paid for by clients. The ‘artistes’ constitute a specific category of short-term migrant women who are allowed to come for three months and have the possibility to extend their stay up to a maximum six of months. Due to this short period of their stay in Cyprus, we cannot consider them as a target category for specific integration processes. However, they constitute an example that reflects modalities through which the regimes based on strictly regulated requirements for entrance visa create very vulnerable and powerless categories of migrant women.

As regards to the ethnicity of these women, they originate mainly from countries in Eastern Europe and have started to come to Cyprus after the crash of communist regimes. The first eastern-European women, who came to work as ‘artistes’, had Romanian nationality. In the beginning, they used to be non-informed or misinformed about the job requirements prior to arrival. Therefore, they would easily become victims of trafficking without any protection from state authorities or civil society. Nowadays, less constrained border controls towards accession country nationals means that these women no longer need to rely on ‘artistes’ visa as one of the few possibilities to work in Cyprus (I 1).

The cabaret workers have the obligation to work at least one month for the employer who brought them to Cyprus. After that, they have the right to change employer, but not occupation, which reflects their dependence on the occupation of ‘artistes’. Theoretically, if they encounter problems, they have the right to complain to the competent authorities, but in practice, most of the time no measures are taken in response to complaints (I 2, I 5).

Cabaret workers are regarded as a ‘danger’ for public health (I 1) and therefore, upon their arrival at the airport are given an eight-day visitor visa in order to go for medical analyses before starting work. The reason for this is that the state authorities assume that these women are not employed only to dance in cabarets, but for prostitution as well. As part of protection measures for public health, women found to have any illnesses are sent back to their countries immediately (I 1).
2.1.5. Pontian Greeks in Cyprus. The first Pontian Greeks arrived in Cyprus in the nineties, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Currently, their total number in Cyprus is around 17000 (I 8). Key informants consider them as being different from the rest of the immigrants in Cyprus because of their Hellenic citizenship as well as their Greek ethnicity (I 3). For the Pontian Greeks, Hellenic citizenship means the official recognition of their Greek ethnicity, and implicitly the legitimization of their rights resulting from ethnic belonging.

According to the criterion of citizenship, there are two categories of Pontian Greeks: those who have Greek citizenship and therefore are EU country nationals, and those without, who are third country nationals. In this sense, the categorization of Pontian Greeks by citizenship determines the related discrimination and different levels of integration into society and the labour market. Thus, different categories of Pontian Greeks enjoy differentiated residence and employment regimes. For example, the Pontian Greeks enjoying more rights (i.e. those having Greek citizenship) can influence political decision-making processes through their right to vote in local elections (I 3).

Dimensions of the Pontian Greeks’ social integration. A key informant points to some indices showing that Pontian Greeks are in Cyprus to stay, even if their initial intention might have been a different one: “Another aspect is that one hundred per cent of Pontian Greeks have come here to work without any initial intention to settle down- they wanted to go back to their countries or back to Greece. But now I can certainly tell you that 45% of these people won’t go back; they will stay as long as they have already begun to put down roots – they build houses, brought apartments, their children have got married here, study here, so they have already settled down in Cyprus” (I 8).

As a decision-maker put it, there is a stringent necessity for integration programmes of Pontian Greeks; moreover, there are no specific programmes for integration of Pontian Greek women: “As regards women, there is nothing specific- such as to help them with the language or other activities and for specialisation in specific employment sectors where they could work” (I 6). We could add, as an observation that there is no governmental initiative in this sense.

Pontian Greeks tend to live together in certain areas, forming their own neighbourhoods: “There is a street in Paphos where only Pontian Greeks used to live, like a ghetto. They have been living on this street for 10 years” (I 3); “(...) there is also a situation of isolation or ghettoisation from the rest of society, as they live in certain areas” (I 6). This pattern of segregated areas of residence could constitute an obstacle for integration at societal level. In this sense, the law to eradicate segregation in schools proposed by the Commissioner for Administration in Cyprus, have had positive influence provided it contributed to the reduction of segregation and heightened integration: “we proposed a law stipulating that one should go to the school of the area he/she lives in. The law has been implemented and in that school where 90 per cent of pupils used to be Pontian Greeks, now there is 50 per cent Greek Cypriots and 50 per cent Pontian Greeks”(I 3).

In proportion of 80 per cent, Pontian Greek women immigrating to Cyprus have tertiary education, but they cannot find analogous employment, and have to work in low-skilled jobs: “usually they start working as cleaners or room maids in hotels” (I 8). The Pontian Greek community has succeeded in obtaining the official recognition of their tertiary degree for all specialisations with the exception of medicine: “therefore, those who have degrees in medicine cannot work as doctors because their diplomas are not recognized” (I 8).

There are two factors that appear to play a central role in the upward social mobility processes of Pontian Greeks: the long duration of their residence in Cyprus and their Greek ethnic
origin. In this sense, our interviewee said: “Nowadays, things changed, Pontian Greeks have worked, have their own businesses, buy houses in middle-class suburbs and their children go to schools and have even very good results (as recent statistics that I’ve just read show) and there are even brilliant pupils among them. Thus, there is mobility in this community. Of course, there are many who face the well-known problems, but I don’t want to say that all the Pontian Greeks are like this” (I 3).

There is no language courses especially designed for Pontian Greeks, even if many of them are willing to attend such courses. In this sense, the Pontian Greek key informant suggests that the state should support those interested with financed individual lessons (I 8).

There is already a second generation of Pontian Greeks who are born and raised in Cyprus. Therefore, assistance is needed for the adjustment of Pontian Greek families to social and cultural environments (I 6).

2.1.6. Female refugees and asylum seekers. Most of the female refugees in Cyprus originate from Iran, Syria, Turkey and Africa (Congo and Sudan). They either come alone (usually African women come only with their children and some are pregnant) or with their children (I 2). According to key informants, there are not many asylum seekers in Cyprus (around 8,000-10,000) and they come mainly from the Chechen republic (I 3).

The discrepancy between law and praxis in relation to asylum seekers was emphasised by some of the key informants. This is exemplified by the difficulty in applying for a monthly allowance, which asylum seekers are entitled to, where in practice the procedure is very complicated and time-consuming: “They rent houses and receive a monthly allowance from the State to pay the rent. In practice, there is a problem with this allowance because many things play a role: how one applies and how his/her application is examined and forwarded to the Social Welfare Department to get the allowance- this is a long and complicated procedure...” (I 3).

As informants said, there are submitted many applications for asylum which are not in concordance with specific criteria, fact that has caused suspicious treatment by state authorities. In this sense, the policy-maker key informant said: “There are many applications submitted which are not in accordance with the criteria for political asylum seekers’ status accordance; this drives society and state authorities very suspicious to all political asylum seekers even when they are real political asylum seekers. And this is true for refugees, as well” (I 6). This constitutes a sort of strategy adopted by work migrants when their contract expires, in order to stay in the country as long as the application procedure for asylum seeker status takes longer than one year.

Usually, when contacting mainstream organisations dealing with migrants, asylum seekers ask for welfare benefits but “it does not mean that if you are an asylum seeker in Cyprus you have the right to welfare benefit” (I 2).

Key informants mentioned an improvement of legislation regarding refugees and political asylum seekers whilst there is implementation gap due to social prejudice. According to a policy-maker key informant, legislation and services for these two categories have been improved, but difficulties concerning social acceptance and perceptions are underlined as aspects which is impossible to be regulated by state legislative authorities: “Unfortunately, we are not in the position to give solutions to how society treats political asylum seekers and refugees- I am referring to employment and broader aspects. This is what creates problems- the fact that rights’ abuse also happens and makes things more difficult” (I 6).
Asylum seekers have the right to work only in agriculture and farming - Employment-related discrimination

One of the key informants stressed the difficult situation that many female asylum seekers have to face, because even if they have qualifications to work in other sectors, they are constrained to undertake low and unskilled employment, a fact that furthermore causes also ‘illegal employment’. Moreover, there are limited jobs available in the two sectors prescribed by the law, and too many people searching work, a situation that similarly causes illicit employment: “The Republic of Cyprus gives them the right to ask for asylum, but doesn’t allow them many possibilities/opportunities to work. This is discrimination, I think, because they are obliged to work only in these sectors even if there are people who are educated and have some qualifications, so that could work in other jobs. There are also many women in this situation: they apply for asylum, but it might take two or three years to receive it and in the meantime they are obliged to work only in those two sectors previously mentioned (...). In this way, many are pushed to work illegally because they have no other choice since there are no available jobs in the two sectors mentioned” (I 8).

2.1.7 Marriage migrants

Migrant workers are many times ‘marriage migrants’. Due to the restrictive regime of residence and employment in Cyprus with the maximum limit of six years, marriage to a Cypriot citizen constitutes the only legal possibility to prolong their stay for many third country or non-EU nationals. This is a factor that produces many fake marriages (when the spouses do not live together) and marriages of convenience (when the spouses live together in marriages that most of the times are loveless), as a key informant said (I 1). This is how our informant presents migrant workers as ‘marriage’ migrants: “there are some...either men or women who enter Cyprus legally, for work on a limited period of time and then, when they see that their work permit is close to its expiration date they try to enter into some marriage with a Cypriot.” (I 1).

In general there is suspicion by immigration authorities about mixed marriages between spouses with large age gaps. Marriages between Filipina or Sri Lankan women and Cypriot men are suspected by immigration authorities to be fake; however, it is difficult to prove these cases: “if no evidence exists that this marriage is a fake one, we have to accept it until the contrary is proven” (I 1).

The Filipina key informant also talks about the police authorities being very circumspect when the degree of heterogeneity between the two spouses’ personal characteristics is too high: “Sometimes there are also marriages of convenience, but not many. But this is not frequent because the Police, they are clever now- especially if it is about a marriage to a Filipina they really open their eyes to see; they are suspicious and especially if they get married to old men, they are very suspicious. I can say this, now they are clever because before they used to accept it, like 60 years old man marrying 35 years old girl- they wouldn’t mind. But now, they know that in order to be able to stay here, they get married. This sounds also funny, but we cannot control it, cannot tell them not to do it. Instead of becoming illegal, they get married” (I 4). Therefore, getting married for obtaining papers to stay legally in Cyprus constitutes a survival strategy for migrant workers.

‘Marriage migrants’: ways to enter, stay and work in Cyprus. The coordinator of a women’s organisation assisting victims of domestic violence mentions one more category of women who come through ‘arranged marriages’ with the purpose of employment. As she said, they
are brought through some agencies and the declared reason is marriage to a Cypriot. In fact, they enter into a sort of artificial marriage in order to obtain the legal papers to remain in Cyprus: "there are women who come to Cyprus for work, usually through an agency or through <arranged marriages>. The latter are women from Bulgaria, Russia coming for ‘arranged marriages’ through some agencies which marry them to old Cypriot men so that they can work simultaneously somewhere else, outside the house’" (I 2).

Exploitation of women ‘marriage migrants’; migrant workers and women in the sex industry. Moreover, according to the same key informant there is another category of women coming as nurses or carers for old men, who are promised a marriage for obtaining the renewal of their residence and work permits, but finally are sent back to their countries without any promise to be kept by their employers.

One further category of women-victims is those forced to work in the sex industry and who are coming to Cyprus as ‘marriage migrants’: “actually they come to marry someone a cabaret owner knows (usually somebody from the cabaret environment) or they come to work in bars. These cases, they come very early to us, usually they stay only 2 or 3 months into that marriage, as they are abused and ask for help...they are abused by their husbands... On the internet there are lots of websites where many men from Cypriot villages exploit sexually and sell their <wives>” (I 2).

Mixed marriages between Pontian Greeks and Greek-Cypriots as indicator of social acceptance and integration. A decrease in social distance between Pontians and Cypriots is exemplified by presenting mixed marriages as a factor contributing to greater social acceptance of the otherness: ‘In the beginning this thing was somehow like forbidden: those who came here as foreigners were only in-marrying, therefore there were no marriages to Cypriots. In the last years I have observed that many Pontian Greek women or other foreign women have got married to Cypriot men- there are mixed marriages taking place and it shows that Pontian Greeks and Cypriots are mixing up. We couldn’t even imagine it some years ago’” (I 8).

2.1.8 Undocumented immigrants

Undocumented immigrants: asylum seekers and illicit work. A main source of illegal immigrants in the Republic of Cyprus is the northern Turkish-occupied part of the island. They come mostly from Arab countries (I 1).

Lack of regularisation procedures for undocumented immigrants. Key informants emphasized the lack of regularisation procedures of undocumented immigrants. Consequently, they are left unprotected and vulnerable to exploitation on “the black market” in Cyprus. As a result, there is an uncontrolled informal labour market which also generates many human rights violations “because somebody who is not legal in Cyprus constitutes an easy victim” (I 3). Legislative initiatives in this sense are inexistent, even if key informants considered them as indispensable: “The <illegal> immigrants cannot be just ignored when migration policy is at the stake- when you try to regulate the issue of immigration, you cannot ignore that these people are< illegal> this is what I believe’’ (I 3).

Visa overstaying: ‘illegal immigrants’ because of the work contract expiration. The Filipina coordinator of a self-help association describes how domestic workers become ‘illegal’ due to their limited duration of stay and civil rights. She points out the very restrictive and inflexible character of the legislation concerning the limited duration of stay for third country nationals: “They become illegal because the employers cannot renew their contract, some want to, but
the problem is the law (accentuated) because nowadays it’s very strict- if you are four years, they want to send you back because they want to avoid- it’s opened country now- those who can apply for citizenship, so they want to avoid that, so it’s mostly now four years” (I 4).

Law limitations and the phenomenon of runaway domestics. The same key informant mentions some reasons why employer and employee could be interested in extending the work contract (in this sense, the law functions as a barrier producing ‘illegal immigrants’). Some of these reasons are the following: the development of affection feelings between the employer and employee and insufficient savings of maids who usually do not want to leave the job without the necessary amount of money; “And this is what the employers actually are complaining about, because they love the girl already- so for both parties it is a difficult situation. Like for example, the girls are not ready to go back to Philippines because it’s not enough money for her family, but she cannot stay more because of the law. And the employer also, she wants the girl, but she couldn’t hire her because of the law. This is the main problem now, that’s why, instead of going back, the girls run away and will fight only to stay here- this is the reason why they become <illegal>” (I 4). Therefore, because of the impossibility by the law of extending the work contract, many domestics are in fact forced to runaway and overstay ‘illegally’ their visa.

Assistance provided to ‘illegal’ domestic workers by self-help associations. Because of their informal and care-centred character, self-help associations undertake the difficult task of providing some protection for ‘illegal’ domestics. They provide limited assistance due to the fear of Police controls: “if the Police catches them in our place it’s against the law” (I 4). The Filipina key informant put emphasis on the powerless situation of ‘illegal domestics’ and the need to provide them with assistance in order to meet their basic needs: “I can help them, yes like for example: for part-time jobs, but secretly, of course because it is not allowed (emphasised by informant). If we don’t help them, what will happen to them? They don’t have a job, a place to stay and money for food. So we find them part-time jobs and give them some things they need. Nothing else, as we are not allowed to do more as this is illegal” (I 4).

‘Illegal’ domestic workers due to the non-provision of release paper by the employer. According to their work contract, domestic workers are entitled to a release paper from their employers in case the latter does not wish to employ a domestic worker anymore. Some employers provide domestic workers with release papers, but others do not. The latter is the case when domestic workers complain to authorities which most of the times are affected by corruption and therefore do not favourably solve domestic workers’ requests. This is due to the fact that in general, employers use their informal connections to influence civil servants. Our participant talks about how “everybody knows everybody in Cyprus” and therefore because of the small size society is not hard for a Cypriot employer to find a way to influence official decisions in their cases. The Filipina key informant who mentioned such cases argued that more and more runaway domestics are not provided with release paper even if they are entitled to it, and therefore this constitutes one of the reasons why they become ‘illegal’: “They used to do this before, but lately- maybe because of the law- so far it is not happening anymore. Women don’t receive release papers and many become illegal. Recently, six girls ran away- they have to meet together in the Ministry of Labour: employer and employee- they have to complain there: why you ran away? Therefore, the case has to be investigated. And when the employee is complaining, than the employer sometimes he says ‘yes, I pay her’; if the employer doesn’t want to give a release paper, than the Labour cannot do anything. According to what we signed, based on our contract, we have the right to release paper. And sometimes, this is causing difficulties because the employer will ask the employee to pay 500 pounds. Because when they hire us, they have to pay the agent 500 pounds and that money
they are not entitled to ask because after 6 months, according to our contract, the employer cannot ask us to pay. And sometimes, they are two years already here and the employer asks for the 500 pounds- that’s why they are becoming illegal”(14).

2.2 The phenomenon of cabaret-type night clubs/venues in Cyprus

The phenomenon of cabaret-type night clubs has to do with the sex industry in Cyprus, and functions as the cover name for brothels where female migrants exclusively are employed. As key informants disclosed, the situation in Cyprus constitutes a case with very specific aspects. Although the nowadays cabaret-type night clubs in Cyprus are equal to prostitution parlours, in the past, they used to be authentic entertainment places with live music and dancers. The process of metamorphosis of cabarets from entertainment places into covered-up brothels is explained by the key informant who wrote an essay on this topic. In the interview he points out the different phases of this process, as enumerated below.

2.2.1. Cabaret-type venues in Cyprus: past manifestations and present realities

Entertainment places with live music by orchestras and dancers. These venues used to employ good-looking young foreign girls as entertainers. Shows used to take place twice a day on weekends, and the clients were mostly families and also single men who used to dance with entertainers after the show when the orchestra was playing music. This phenomenon has been traced back to the period when Cyprus was a British colony (15).

With the passage of time, the dancers acquired new roles through the emergence of “consommation” (in French)/consumption of drinks and prostitution paid by wealthy men (15). Female dancers used to work also as “consommatrice” (French)/“drinker” or “consumer” drinking small ‘shots’ of non-alcoholic drinks with clients. Also, alcoholic drinks were offered to dancers by wealthy men, in order to take them away for sexual intercourse (15).

Relationship between consumption of alcoholic drinks in cabarets and trafficking. In order to increase their profits, cabaret owners have begun to push female dancers into drinking together with the clients, as a prologue for a possible sexual intercourse (15).

According to key informants, sex workers come on cabaret ‘artistes’ visas with the consent of state authorities that tacitly agree with the activities of cabaret ‘artistes’: “The fact that women have started coming to Cyprus as dancers, in a formal way, has not changed yet-in the sense that they are officially called ‘artistes’. What they do in reality doesn’t have anything to do with dancing. These women are granted ‘artistes’ visa for entertainment purposes, but what they do is not dancing. This is what the state authorities don’t understand, or they do understand but don’t have the power to take analogous measures. This is the core of the problem’” (15).

2.2.2. Trafficking of women

Key informants provided information about trafficking of cabaret “artistes”, trafficking of migrant women workers for purposes of sexual exploitation, and about possible ways in which state authorities could deal with trafficking-related issues.

Trafficking and cabaret work. In the first years when women from eastern European countries came to work on “artistes” visa for the first time, they were only partially or not at all aware about the requirements of the job. Usually, they were not previously told about obligations to consume alcoholic drinks with clients, and then to have sexual intercourse in order to make
clients come back to cabaret. Moreover, the cabaret workers are compelled to comply with their employers’ requests or otherwise they have to leave (I 1).

**Cabarets selling women (trafficking and evidences for prosecution).** In order to arrest owners of cabarets selling women to clients, the police use false clients willing to testify against cabaret owners. The key informant from the immigration police described how they deal with cases when information is available about “artistes” sold by cabaret owners: “In some instances, in order to take a case to the court, we usually /set it up- more explicitly, we know that, for example a cabaret sells girls, but we cannot arrest the owner, okay. So we set it up: send someone who is willing to do so and to testify before the court; and is not concerned if his name is publicly made known. We tell him: ‘Come on koumbar 
(literary meaning ‘best man’ in Greek), we want to arrange this case, you go and then testify’. And then the koumbaros goes to the cabaret owner and tells him: ‘I want this girl to go with her’’, ‘Okay, give me 40 pounds and give her- let’s say- three drinks and then go to that apartment/hotel and I’ll send her’. So, the koumbaros goes and meets the girl. Okay, because our friend wants to help us, he will write down and sign a testimony declaring his name (signed), and saying that the cabaret owner he contacted sold him the girl by paying him 40 pounds and so on- he will write down everything, all the story. With this testimony, the cabaret owner can be condemned and it is clear that he will be put in jail. It is difficult, of course, to find men who are willing to testify…” (I 1).

**Trafficking by clients.** Key informants talked about clients insisting to go with ‘artistes’ after the show and ‘consommation’. They more or less deal with the cabaret owner the price for a woman. In case the client knows the cabaret owner, prices would be cheaper. Otherwise the rates might be high, including the ‘consommation’. This is why, as key informant put it, there are the so-called frequent clients of cabarets who make a ‘hobby’ out of this, going from one cabaret to another in search of ‘new experiences’ (I 5). Therefore, clients pay to ‘rent’ cabaret workers and some abuse them physically. A key informant who was a former medical assistant key informant argued that women working as “artistes” are abused by clients both physically and psychologically (I 7).

**Measures against trafficking: prosecution and shelters.** As a result of the report about trafficking by the Ombudswoman (in 2003), there have been some cases of arrest for trafficking of women (but no convictions), and a special department against trafficking was created by the police: “there are more persons arrested now; before nobody used to be taken to Court and be prosecuted for trafficking”. Moreover, there are some measures taken to protect and host victims in shelters of the Police or of the Social Welfare Services. Key informants suggested that the Ombudswoman’s report on trafficking constitutes a first and unfortunately singular acknowledgement of the existence of trafficking in Cyprus, and the role of the cabaret-type night clubs in the institutionalisation of this phenomenon with the consent of the state (I 3).

### 2.2.3. Cabaret work, trafficking and prostitution

According to key informants, it is difficult to prove prostitution cases (I 1). In relation to cabaret ‘artistes’, there is no case of free choice prostitution as long as this specific category of migrant women is brought to Cyprus by their employers and their dependence on them is absolute. Therefore, elements of forced prostitution and trafficking intersect in the case of cabaret work.

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2 The topic is developed furthermore in the next section 2.2.3
Prostitution by ‘consent’. Cabaret “artistes” are forced to go with clients under the fear of losing their job and being deported. They have the right to change employer only after one month work at the original employer (I 1).

In terms of forms of prostitution that were discussed in key informant interviews we can delimit: (a) Autonomous/free choice prostitution is when a woman prostitutes herself without any involvement of third parties (I 1) and (b) Prostitution by pimps/ with intermediary (specific for cabarets, but also bars, restaurants and other entertainment venues) is illegal and sanctioned by the law (I 1).

Clients of cabarets/Demand side for cabaret workers. Key informants have talked about how clients go to cabarets aiming to have sexual intercourse with “artistes” for money; they are mostly older men and married men who search new sexual relationships (I 5). According to this perspective, the demand side determines the prostitution of “artistes”. Different reasons are given by clients for using “artistes”, such as the difficulty of having extra-conjugal relationships with Cypriot women because of the small size of the female population and the closed society with rooted prejudices and a strong informal social control (I 5); and/or desires of older men to have intimate relationships with young women (I 5). Some clients act as “a man in love” and try to follow certain patterns of dating and courtship; some of them used to “spend many thousands of pounds on virgin girls. They used to bring many virgin girls, long time ago, from the Philippines, aged between 16 and 18 years. Usually, these girls used to believe that they come here to dance and not also do the other things, like ‘consommation’ and prostitution” (I 5).

Professional and ‘innocent’ prostitution. Although brothels are forbidden in Cyprus, they exist in the form of cabaret type venues, a fact that facilitates trafficking practices. Actually, this is partially due to preferences of the demand side for ‘non-professional’ or covered-up prostitution: ”(...) if it is to bring a professional prostitute who has been doing this job for 10 years let’s say, you cannot just compare her with a 20-years girl who has just come from her country and is almost innocent even if....” (I 5).

Physical appearance of cabaret workers and native women’s negative reaction. The key informant who is an former medical assistant in a private gynaecological clinic talked about how she used to make appointments for cabaret workers out of the programme hours because of the native women’s negative reaction when seeing cabaret “artistes”. The latter can be easily identified due to their specific physical appearance: “Imagine Cypriot women staying there and waiting and suddenly seeing, let’s say ten girls without many clothes on or wearing only few clothes and much make-up. When seeing them, Cypriot women used to leave asking at what time they could come back. You know, if one sees these girls, he/she understands very quickly what they do (repeated) – (I 7)”. The same key informant mentioned that groups of cabaret workers used to be taken for gynaecological consultations in the private clinic. They were always accompanied by the cabaret owner and a foreign woman and former cabaret ‘artiste’ married to a Cypriot (I 7).

Cabaret workers are not covered by medical insurance. Beauty capital and hierarchy of cabaret workers. In relation to the payment for medical treatment for “artistes”, the owners used to be reluctant when they had to pay for medical visits and treatment. Cabaret owners would pay only for women with whom they had had sexual intercourse (I 7).

The portrait of cabaret workers, as recounted in key informant interviews, has the following characteristics:
(a) Education of cabaret workers and motivations for working as “artistes”. According to some key informants, many cabaret workers are educated (I 7), while according to others, many originate from small, isolated villages and are not educated (I 5). As incentives for
working as “artistes”, key informants mentioned financial motivations due to poor living conditions and low salaries in the countries of origin (I 5, I 7). As a key informant mentioned: “I used to ask them (cabaret workers) in a friendly manner <why do you work here and do what you do?>. And they always used to reply <Because of the money>” (I 7).

Poverty in the sender countries is considered as a determinant factor in taking the decision to accept employment in the sex industry. Therefore, issues about prostitution and sex-trafficking cannot be solved only with legal decisions, if there are no corresponding measures taken to suppress the causes (I 5).

(b) Nationalities of “artistes”. In the beginning of the nineties, “artistes” used to be Romanian and Bulgarian women –before they had been Filipina women. After that many Polish women came, and starting in 2000 up till now, they are mostly women from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldavia (I 5 and I 7).

(c) Differentiation of cabaret workers by their places of residence. According to a key informant, girls from villages are not as good looking as those from towns because do not know how to ‘improve’ their physical appearance and would ask for advice from those originating in urban areas if they wanted to earn more money (I 7).

(d) Cabaret workers’ psychology and competitive relations among “artistes”. A key informant gave some information concerning concessions made by cabaret artistes and their wish to prostitute themselves because of the eagerness to increase their incomes (I 7). Another informant compares the nowadays ‘artistes’ with the women who came to work in cabarets in the first years of the 1990s and who are believed not to have known the real meaning of working in cabaret: “They used to be very respectful, not entirely innocent, but did not make use of all the possible ways to get money from clients” (I 5).

(e) Professional dancers coming to work in cabarets. Differentiation of cabarets by clients’ social class. According to a key informant there are also professional dancers (not fake “artistes”), who come to work in cabarets doing only striptease and do not engage in prostitution. They are said to come and work in deluxe cabarets where men from higher social strata would go (I 7).

Sex workers come on cabaret ‘‘artistes’’ visas with the consent of state authorities (I 5). In theory, prostitution by cabaret workers is legal as long as no third party is involved. On the other hand, the consumption of alcoholic drinks by clients together with “artistes” constitutes a source of income for the cabaret owners, but implicitly it represents an opportunity for a first encounter taking place with the purpose of sexual intercourse. In relation to these issues, a key informant raised the question of the penalisation of demand: “It means that if it can be proven the case when a man forces a girl to have sexual intercourse for money, then the man has to be convicted and put in prison” (I 5). This should happen also when no third party is involved, because cabaret owners gain incomes from the consumption of alcoholic drinks (I 5).
According to the same informant, most of the time, clients make offers to have sexual intercourse with the women for money (I 5). In this sense, the issue of trafficking by clients represents a theme for reflection as long as “in this case, the woman sells her body and the man buys it. This is a different situation from that of traditional prostitution where women used to perform prostitution as a profession. In our case, we speak about women coming to work as dancers and some men force them to sell their bodies, of course in exchange of money” (I 5). From this point of view, a very wide definition of trafficking arises as women
working in cabarets are a priori trafficked as long as they come as dancers on “artistes” visas and end up in prostitution.

*Prior information of cabaret workers is considered irrelevant.* Some of the women deciding to come are not informed in advance that they actually come as “artistes” and not as artists. In this sense, a key informant mentioned: “[In their countries, most of them are told <you come to work in a bar and you will dance, serve drinks and be nice with clients>. They were not told in advance that they would have to have sexual intercourse with men’” (I 7).

Other women know and think they will choose the men with whom to have sexual intercourse in exchange of money, and that they would not have to share profits with a third party. One of the key informants considers that prior information of cabaret workers is not important: “Because whether you know it or not, the issue is that sexual exploitation is still there” (I 3). This is in relation to what is already mentioned about the ‘artistes’ visa which serve the scope of importing women for illegal prostitution.

*Conditions of work and stay of cabaret workers.* When narrating stories about cases of trafficked women, some informants mentioned that these are locked into their rooms by cabaret owners who also keep their passports (I 3). On the other hand, some key informants who talked with cabaret workers said that ‘artistes’ are allowed to spend their free time as they want. The accommodation conditions are described as very poor, with two or three cabaret workers living in the same room without basic living facilities (I 7).

### 3. Immigration and integration: country specificities

We present in this section main findings that are related to variables such as: integration; articulation of class, gender and ethnicity; relationship between legislation and praxis; mainstream NGOs and self-help organisations of migrants; the relationship between European and national legislation.

#### 3.1 Integration: meanings and conditions

What does integration mean? Integration concepts are contested (FeMiPol project annex). In relation to *policy*, they are based on the concept of ‘citizenship’ and focus on dimensions relating to citizenship rights: socio-economic, cultural and legal/political rights. This takes into account the need to combine integration policy with basic democratic values.

At the level of the *actors*, integration concepts are structured around elements of a recognition theory such as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society” (Phennix 2004:5 cited in the FeMiPol project Annex). According to the definition that we adopted (FeMiPol project Annex), social integration is “the ability for intentional action in a society, main indicators being the access to resources, participation, social mobility and belonging”.

What does integration consist of? Certain basic conditions need to be respected in order to make integration happen (IOM, World Migration, 2003: 74). For immigrants, these include: command of the language of the host society in oral and written form; access to the educational system and the labour market; possibility of upwards mobility through education and job performance; equality before the law; religious and cultural freedom; respect for laws and traditions in host societies. For the host society, the basic conditions of integration include: tolerance and openness; willingness to welcome immigrants; understanding the advantages and challenges of multicultural societies; access to unbiased information about the
advantages of integration, tolerance and intercultural dialogue; respect and understanding of the immigrant’s condition, traditions and culture; respect for migrants’ human rights.

The meanings that the key informants give to the integration of immigrants encompass most of the conditions previously mentioned. On one hand, integration is regarded as a controlled and regulated process implemented through specific programmes regarding: the Greek language learning, integration of immigrant women in labour market, and programmes aiming to prepare Cypriot society for accepting migrant women. Moreover, factors influencing, in a positive sense, immigrants’ integration are discussed, such as: the duration of stay in the host country and social mobility.

As regards the Cypriot society as a host society, basic conditions of integration, such as tolerance and openness, and willingness to welcome immigrants are inexistent/invisible. Instead, there is xenophobia and racism, reflected in practices concerning treatment of migrants: unwillingness to integrate immigrants and negative perceptions prevailing at the state authorities’ level. A policy-maker key informant put emphasis on factors related to unfavourable societal attitudes and representations of immigrants, who generally are not welcomed in Cypriot society (I 6).

Key informants’ understandings of immigrants’ integration. From the perspective of a policy-maker key informant, some influencing factors should be taken into account when issues about integration of immigrants are considered. In this sense, Cyprus as a recent immigration country, Cyprus as a traditional emigration country, the small number of settlers in Cyprus, and the temporary stay and employment regime of migrants, are factors that influence integration and do not constitute conditions that would encourage the state authorities to adopt any integration policies (I 6). In this context, the main meanings of integration expressed by key informants are as follows:

-Integration as implementation of specific programmes targeting on one hand the immigrant women and on the other hand the host society. The necessity of Greek language courses especially designed for immigrant women was emphasised, and the need for programmes aiming at including immigrant women in the labour market (i.e. vocational training and rehabilitation).

-Integration as connection with trade unions. In relation to inclusion in labour market, the importance of this connection is emphasised, for developing a sense of belonging, a first connection of immigrant women with their host society. On the other hand, this connection is loose and even inexistent, especially in relation to the most exploited categories of migrant women in Cyprus: domestic workers and sex workers in cabaret type venues (I 6).

-Social mobility and the duration of stay in the host country were identified as factors influencing integration. Upward social mobility of Pontian Greek women in Cyprus is regarded as contributing to their increasing social acceptance at societal level. Moreover, a longer duration of residence and employment in Cyprus favours successful integration processes- this is said to be true as regards to the Pontian Greeks in Cyprus (I 8).

-The question of integration in relation to the division between non-EU and EU migrant workers. According to key informants, because of their limited period of stay and restrictive rights to work, in theory, the question of integration cannot concern non-EU migrant workers. Instead, the attention should focus mostly on the acceptance and protection of their rights (I 6). Therefore, the possibilities for integration are significantly reduced when it comes to the domestic workers and sex workers. This perspective excludes the possibility of revising the immigration regime and disrupting the idea of temporality being the norm. It is significant to say that all the key informants accepted this as a ‘fact’ that cannot be proposed to be changed.
On the other hand, EU migrant workers are not constrained by restrictive regimes of residence and employment, and therefore could choose to settle down and benefit from integration programmes: “In the coming years we will have more immigrants from EU countries who won’t have these limitations imposed by the period of their stay. Therefore, we should start thinking about programmes which will give them opportunities to integrate” (I 6).

-Mixed marriages and integration: the mixed marriages between Pontian Greeks and Greek-Cypriots are regarded as an indicator of greater social acceptance and integration of the non-Cypriot spouse (I 8).

(1) Immigration policy-integration policy. According to key informants, there is a total lack of integration policies for immigrants, a situation that reflects the underdevelopment of the immigration policy domain in Cyprus. When asked about the immigration policy in Cyprus, key informants agreed that this is a domain that lacks proper adjustment to current necessities, and therefore needs to be adapted and even designed to take into account different realities implied by the Cyprus’s membership in the EU. The existing policy on immigration is defined as ad-hoc and fragmentary. It is “continuously designed to cope with different major policies and short-term needs of Cypriot society and economy” (I 3). Therefore, ‘the legislation follows practice and needs principle’ translates into the inexistence of any coherent approach understood as migration policy. In this sense, “the government has always responded with decisions of the Council of Ministers to the needs that used to appear every time” (I 3).

The law on immigration is not adapted to current necessities, and therefore it needs to be adjusted in order to integrate EU directives. Furthermore, the necessity of new legislation on immigration was emphasised, to envisage various topics of integration of immigrants, such as education, gender, police violence, racism, racist violence. As a key informant put it: “there is no policy or general framework in this sense” (I 3).

A female key informant indicated what she considers to be the only good law concerning migration in Cyprus, and explained her motives: “The only good law we’ve got in Cyprus, concerning migration, is the one regarding the minimum reception standards and conditions in asylum seekers because it is in fact the translation of the corresponding EU Directive. At least in this case they took the directive, translated it and made it national law” (I 2).

A project to change the Immigration law has been produced under the pressure and criticisms from the EU in relation to the modality in which the Cyprus government understands and treats immigration issues. A policy-maker key informant addressed topics related to the immigration legislation, stressing the very slow process of adopting the specific legislation and the delays in these processes, due to disagreements amongst the different ministries involved, as well as pressure from the EU. The legislative changes are depicted as complicated procedures, in which various services are involved, a situation that produces delays in the process of legislation modification. The involvement of different ministries and civil services is regarded as causing delays in the legislative process because of disagreements and postponements of negotiations for drafts of laws (I 6).

However, there is no separate institution dealing with migration-related issues in Cyprus. A key informant motivated this situation by invoking difficulties concerning the small size of the country and the institutional effort needed in this sense. The respondent also believes that this segregation of the competencies among diverse ministries is useless. More competencies should be conferred to the Ministry of Labour, while limiting the involvement of the Ministry of the Interior. Moreover, emphasis is put on the necessity “to have a specialised department to deal expressly with these matters” (I 6).
Immigration policy implementation and its consequences on integration processes. The section of immigration policy implementation regarding the system of strict allocation of work permits for migrant workers and the limited period of their residence and employment is rigorously respected. In this respect, the problematic domain concerns the rights of immigrants and the problematic implementation of these in practice.

Two issues are given emphasis here: first, there are different categories of migrants who in practice do not have access to welfare benefits and second, due to a time-consuming bureaucracy, there are asylum seekers left without legal papers because of delays in paper procedures. Furthermore, the competent authorities do not implement the legislation properly (I 2). While the process of national legislation implementation is regarded as problematic, the process of national legislation adjustment to EU directives is not considered as such (I 6).

Rights of immigrants and integration. Key informants referred to this connection by envisaging the following issues: the proposal for the right to vote in municipal elections of third country nationals; the imbalance between Cypriot citizenship rights and the rights of the EU country citizens in Cyprus; lack of access to medical services of Pontian Greeks who are non-EU citizens because of delays in renewing their residence permits; domestic workers getting pregnant with Cypriots as a strategy for obtaining the extension of their residence permit; the practice regarding the control of ‘illegal immigration’ through constraints on the right to education for immigrants’ children, which heightens social exclusion of ‘illegal immigrants’.

3.2 Articulation of gender, ethnicity and class

Aspects concerning processes of class, gender and ethnicity were identified in the respondents’ narratives in relation to the following topics: immigration legislation and the gender dimension, and the treatment of immigrant women at the state authorities’ level.

The immigration-related legislation and regulations in Cyprus have no gender dimension. The general coordinator of Apanemi, a women’s organisation dealing with migrant women, has stressed the importance of including the gender approach in immigration-related policy. She talked about how her organisation follows in practice this imperative requirement and includes aspects of gender, age, ethnicity and religion in policy drafts. The respondent also gave an example to illustrate how the religious and cultural backgrounds of Muslim women influence gender-specific choices for female medics. Through lobbying for female asylum seekers, Apanemi obtained the separation of the reception centre for women asylum seekers and their families.

Legislation and legal procedures in Cyprus are far from being neutral considering the fact that they promote discrimination relative to gender and ethnicity in relation to female migrant workers in Cyprus, e.g. domestic workers and sex workers. In this sense, their wages are established through administrative acts and are not a result of collective agreements. This situation is explained as being a result of their specific conditions of work that determine difficulties in organising themselves and vindicating rights (I 3).

The sex workers constitute a category that reflects the modalities thought which the regimes based on strictly regulated requirements for entrance visas create an extremely vulnerable and powerless category of migrant women.
The super exploitation of the cabaret workers is reflected also in the fact that like other migrant workers, the cabaret workers have to pay income taxes, even if these result from the exploitation of immigrant women by their employers. Therefore, the state assumes that ‘artistes’ do not only dance, but also earn money from the consumption of alcoholic drinks and prostitution.

At the level of legislation implementation practices, the topic regarding the treatment of immigrant women by civil servants in the state authorities is addressed by most of the key informants. They make references to discriminatory behaviours of civil servants towards categories of immigrant women, such as domestic workers, cabaret workers and Pontian Greek women. All the references concerning this topic underline the marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged positions of immigrant women in Cyprus.

In relation to ethnic discrimination in the case of domestic workers, the following practices are mentioned: unfair and superficial investigation of the police in cases when employers accuse their domestic workers of theft, an accusation that might be not true in cases where employers make up stories in order to get rid of their maids, and the latter usually put in prison without any investigations, and then repatriated (I 4); improper interventions of public authorities in cases concerning the deaths of domestic workers; civil servants are corrupt and do not act when domestic workers complain (I 4).

Public authorities react only when cabaret workers complain. Key informant interviews revealed that the number of identified trafficking victims is very small, and those cabaret workers who make complaints usually want to leave the country and not stay and work in Cyprus anymore. In part, this is due also to the hypocritical modality in which the whole topic of cabaret workers is treated by the state authorities. The latter “arrest the accused person and put them in jail for one week and then everybody forgets about it” (I 5).

Racist behaviour of the state authorities. Cases of racial discrimination against Asian and African persons are indicated by key informants as being a frequent phenomenon. Even if the law does not discriminate against different ethnic groups, the behaviour of the employees at state authority level discriminates against non-white people: “When civil servants must take a decision in a case that involves both a European and an African or Asian, then they discourage the latter and generate all kinds of obstacles for them. They treat them differently” (I 5).

3.3 Mainstream NGOs and self-help associations of female migrants

Mainstream women’s organisation assisting female migrants (Informant 2). In Cyprus, there is no mainstream women’s organisation to deal exclusively with migrant women. However, there is one mainstream organisation of women that deploys activities in relation to female migrants, named Apanemi (Women’s Information and Resources Centre Shelter of Victims of Violence). The organisation assists migrant women as victims of different forms of violence, and also deals with problems encountered by female refugees and asylum seekers. The organisation was founded in 2004 and starting with the current year it will have national coverage.

One goal of the organisation is to help migrant women in setting up their own associations to be supported by Apanemi. Another aim is to integrate women into the organisation considering their low current participation, mainly as interpreters and translators. Another goal of the organisation is to improve policies related to immigration, given its participation in
the process of revising law drafts regarding asylum seekers, refugees and immigration in general.

Activities meant to assist diverse categories of female migrants through the organisation are: psychological support and help with educational training, afternoon classes for learning the Greek language, access to legal procedures, and assistance in finding jobs for asylum seekers and refugees. In this sense, our informant said: “We help migrants in finding housing, work, reading newspaper ads together. For those economic migrants coming on a work contract it is easy to find another employer if they need to. There are refugees who work without any work contract. As regards asylum seekers, they do not have any access to the labour market; it is difficult for them to find a job (even in the agricultural sectors). Even when they work, their salaries are very low, the conditions they live in are very poor; they work and get paid as foreigners but have to pay the same prices as the Cypriots do. The situation is the worst for the asylum seekers because in practice they do not have any rights” (I. 2). Therefore, the key informant indicates as the most disadvantaged groups, the female asylum seekers and refugees, as they work without employment contract, have limited access to the labour market, are low paid and have no access to welfare benefits.

Former sex workers who have married Cypriot men, and migrant women victims of domestic violence, together with their children, constitute distinct categories that need special assistance. Moreover, the difficulty in providing assistance to victims of sexually related violence who are of non-Christian faiths is emphasised.

The main activity of the above organisation concerns the needs assessment of women. Other activities are mentioned, such as those contributing to the development of a feeling of belonging in the organisation; encouragement of women migrant having initiatives, such as to take up activities by themselves; aid provided through different activities promoting cooperation between migrant and native women.

The organisation has good results in assisting diverse categories of women and also difficulties because of the incipient phase of the organisation described as a ‘struggle’. Problems of migrants, like for example lack of access to welfare benefits and low economic resources are considered real obstacles when deploying activities targeting migrant women: “when you are acting on the behalf of some people, you see the obstacles any woman/man encounters in dealing with everyday problems; when he/she doesn’t have access to welfare benefit and must support a family of five members, has no money to pay the rent...these are real obstacles and difficulties. Thus, the obstacles exist not only at the organisation levels, but mostly at the individual level” (I 2).

Moreover, state agencies are blamed for generating delays in the provision of funds for different projects regarding migrant women. Another obstacle in this sense is the general underdevelopment of institutional structures for migrants’ support in Cyprus, such as the lack of access to information regarding the right of migrants:”In Cyprus there are no basic structures for migrants support- e.g. a migrant cannot understand in his/her language their rights, so that they don’t have access to information and there is no issues clarification”(I 2) . Moreover, there is a gap in monitoring and assisting migrants when it comes to their legal human rights.

*Assistance for victims of trafficking provided by mainstream NGOs.* Mainstream organisations dealing with victims of violence assist victims of trafficking by providing legal advice and psychological support, since a special shelter for victims of trafficking is not available yet.
There are many difficulties in identifying the victims of trafficking, and therefore the number of identified victims is very small. As a respondent revealed, “last year there were only 13 identified victims” (I 2). There are also several examples of the maltreatment of trafficking victims by the competent authority, such as the practice of cutting off some welfare benefits, a fact that has negative consequences as long as cabaret workers have no right to change employment, with no possibility to be employed in another job; verbal violence targeting victims who are ‘sent back’ to their ‘lovers’ by employees of the competent authority; the trafficking victims are hosted in unsuitable places such as hostels for old people and are given an insignificant amount of money (less than one euro per day). Moreover, confidentiality and legal procedures in cases of domestic violence and trafficking are not respected by the police, Welfare Services and other competent services (I 2).

**Self-help associations by migrant women** (Informant 4). A female coordinator of an association of domestic workers was interviewed in order to make sense of the modalities in which organisations by migrants are influenced and concomitantly influence policy-making processes in relation to migrant women. This is a church association structured around a self-help informal network of teams formed by domestic helpers who are predominantly women from South-East Asia. Apart from religious activities, the association offers social and informal psychological support to members of their community who are in a vulnerable position, helping their members and non-members to obtain legal support/advise and connect them with local human rights NGOs for assistance in labour disputes and other matters. The association offers the following support:

- Assistance provided to newcomer maids in how to deal with the relationship employer-employee, and generally about the process of adjustment to job requirements. This is assumed to help the newcomer maids learn from other domestics’ experience.
- Counselling for domestics: refer cases to the competent authorities, deal with the cases of maids who do not take their advice, and support runaway maids to report their cases to the police; shelter and aid provided to runaway domestics.
- Legal advice for maids, which is obtained through informal means by the Filipina coordinator who has worked for a family of lawyers for many years: “Both of them are lawyers (the couple) and they know how to advice me and I learnt how to advice people, as well. As employers, they are very supportive of me and teach me how to fairly deal with each case, for the good of both the employer and the employee. Because when we have a case I ask her <Madam, how could I help this situation and may be she cannot give me an answer immediately because she has also to study and think carefully before she advices me. For most of the advice she gave me there are good results’’ (I 4).
- Self-help activities for mobilisation to collect funds for paying medical treatments of domestic workers.

As our interviewee said, self-help associations by domestic workers aim at fighting against negative public perceptions and representations of Filipina women and migrants in general and subsequently against their bad treatment in Cypriot society: “Because there are also some Filipina girls having like boyfriends mostly they are old men. And you know, people here they don’t respect us and they say that <Filipina women are only 10 pounds>. If some Filipinas do this, they look down on all of us- that’s why we are so down in this country and they don’t respect us much. Many Filipinas here are married to Cypriots, most of them are not accepted by their parents-in-law because of the same reasons- they say we used to have boyfriends. And these women are not all of them this kind of persons. And we want also to fight for this-why they look down on us, but how can we fight for that?
We cannot blame them because some girls do these things, but they treat all of us the same way and the same is true for Sri Lankiness. Being migrants, they think about us very low" (I 4).

Environment of mainstream organisations for migrants

It is described as underdeveloped, very antagonistic and lacking cooperation among the mainstream organisations for migrants. Key informants invoked the existence of xenophobic resentments at the level of the Cypriot society as a cause for the non-participation of Cypriots in the NGOs for migrants. However nothing is mentioned about the low level of migrants’ participation in organisations. Moreover, the negative reaction of state authorities that treat the NGOs for migrants with suspicion is mentioned as a cause for the non-involvement of both Greek-Cypriots and migrants in NGOs (I 6).

On the other hand, the example of positive cooperation between a self-help association of domestic workers and a mainstream organisation dealing with migrants was mentioned. The former asks assistance from the latter in cases concerning domestic workers, mainly when they cannot mediate with employers and authorities of the Ministry of Labour (I 4). This mainstream organisation has one office only which is based in Nicosia, and therefore has no national coverage and the necessary resources, a fact that causes difficulties in assisting domestic workers and other immigrants all over the island.

Assistance requests from a mainstream organisation for migrants. Our Filipina interviewee describes modalities in which they solicit assistance in cases concerning domestic workers, specifically when they cannot mediate with employers and authorities of the Ministry of Labour. “Mostly now that the Labour doesn’t see our cases, we go to KISA (an organisation for migrants). Somehow they really help, but now because, of course, migrants know that KISA was helping, sometimes even when the case is not reasonable, they make some problems. And the cases they help now are limited”. This mainstream organisation has only one office, based in Nicosia and therefore has no national coverage and the necessary resources, fact that causes difficulties in assisting domestic workers or generally immigrants all over the island.

3.4 The link between European and national policies on immigration:

Immigration-related EU directives

Overall, there is little awareness of EU policies on migration and public debates on European citizenship at the level of Cypriot society (I 6). Under these circumstances, immigration-related EU directives appear to be marginalised and not considered as important as EU economic policies, of which Cypriots “have negative and suspicious perceptions” in general (I 6).

There are two EU directives that are given great public prominence in current public discourses due to the fact that they are of major importance to the overall policy regarding immigration to Cyprus; the amount of public prominence is also due to some ‘security’ reasons about how to better control immigration, as discussed below. These are the EU directives concerning long-term residence and family reunification in relation to immigrants in Cyprus.

The EU directive concerning long-term residence. This directive “should have been implemented in Cyprus by the 23rd of January 2006. In general terms, it reads that anybody
who has five years of legal residence in Cyprus is allowed to ask for an unlimited residence period (long-term residence) in Cyprus. This directive has not been implemented yet” (I 3). This directive is regarded both as a step towards the integration processes and as rendering to the social exclusion of ‘illegal immigrants’: “the question to be answered is what will happen with the thousands of illegal immigrants, 50,000–60,000 immigrants who are illegal because either they came here illegally, or their work and residence permits have expired and therefore became illegal” (I 3).

A policy-maker key informant mentioned that there are some “conscious” delays in the adjustment and implementation of EU directives, in general. She referred to the EU directive previously mentioned, stressing that in the future this will be adopted by the parliament (I 6). According to the same key informant, this directive renders easier the integration of those immigrants who already live in Cyprus, while it could have negative effects for newcomers (I 6). In fact, these presupposed effects on the newcomers from third countries are real only on the condition that they would come on a limited work contract period of maximum four years. Therefore, these work migrants could not be given any chance to ask for long-term residence providing their contract is on a limited period.

The general coordinator of the Apanemi women’s organisation is extremely critical of this directive because of various restrictive conditions to be fulfilled by those who wish to become long-term immigrants in Cyprus. At least two conditions are very difficult to accomplish by those migrant workers who have completed five years of legal stay in Cyprus and would have the right to apply for long-term residence. These conditions envisage the knowledge of Cyprus history and good language skills: “we have the draft and we are making comments on this draft. It reads that a foreign worker who wants to become a long-term migrant must know Cyprus history and good Greek language, as well” (I 2). Moreover, the form in which the directive would be implemented does not take into account ethnic values and norms such as those concerning arranged marriage, and therefore renders more difficult the process of family reunification (I 2).

Practical considerations concerning the condition of good knowledge of the Greek language for obtaining long-term residence status are related to the migrants’ difficulty in learning the literally Greek language providing that they speak and hear everyday the Cypriot dialect, which differs in many respects from the Greek language. Moreover, because of the low educational level of many immigrants (according to a key informant), proving good knowledge of the Greek language through state routes seems to be an unattainable goal: “most of the work migrants in Cyprus are not even educated– I knew many who cannot write even in their language. They should prove that they know very well Greek through exams organised by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, I wonder how many of these would be able to pass these exams. If we only take into consideration the fact that the Cypriot dialect they hear and the Greek language are two different things...you understand how difficult it is, because you read in one way which is different from what you hear on the street” (I 3). This key informant argues that the difficulty regarding the implementation of this EU directive is due to “the total lack of migration policy in Cyprus” and the non-existence of any planning and recruitment of migrants with various levels of qualifications (I 3).

The EU directive regarding family reunification. This has not been adopted yet, but comments on this directive show that its implementation will be problematic as long as Cyprus could comply only with the minimum standards set by this directive: “Let’s say you stay legally in Cyprus, whom you can bring in? The question is if you can bring your husband, children and who else. In general, the EU directives set up standards, minimum standards. After that, it
depends on the specific country to which extent it can comply with these standards. For example, this EU directive reads that you can bring your children and the spouse, but any country could also allow parents to be brought in” (I 3).

There are no favourable changes for immigrants resulting from Cyprus’s membership in the EU. A Pontian Greek key informant mentioned that the membership of Cyprus in the EU has not brought any favourable changes either for immigrants in Cyprus in general, or for Pontian Greeks without Greek citizenship. The latter category of migrants is insecure about their residence status: “they have an uncertain residence status here, so they still could be sent back at any time. Therefore, they cannot freely work in Cyprus, so far” (I 8).

4. Concluding summary

This is a summary of main themes concerning immigrant women and policies of immigration and integration in Cypriot societal context, as they resulted from the key informant interviews. Overall, the key informants were of great help to the research due to several reasons: firstly, they provided us with useful information we have already inserted in our report about mapping of policies in relation to the integration of female migrants in labour market and society3, and therefore we took the chance to cover areas not being envisaged when reviewing the specific bibliography. Secondly, many findings from the key informant interviews confirm outcomes of other previous research on the topic under discussion or on topics related to it. We further on point to modalities in which key informants improved our knowledge on policy making and policy implementing processes.

Main conceptual constructions emerged in relation to definitions of immigrants and categories of immigrants such as: recentness of immigration to Cyprus, and categories of immigrants according to the criterion settler-non-settler. The latter categories envisages the following: the “old” foreign workers who are third country nationals on an entry-visa regime with limited stay and employment terms; while the “new” migrant workers are the new EU member state nationals and EU accession country nationals with no or less limitations on residence and employment conditions; and finally “real” immigrants or “old” EU country citizens: Pontian Greeks with Greek citizenship and British citizens. These delimitations were very clear-cut in all the narratives of our key informants who emphasise some sort of hierarchy of migrants according to criteria established by the immigration regime in Cyprus, such as entry restriction, work and residence permits and therefore the corresponding rights and liberties. Generally, their discourses evolve around this hierarchy without seeing this as something we should or could change. The changes envisaged cover mostly some secondary improvements and do not propose fundamental transformations to the mainstream discourse on migration to Cyprus.

In this sense, the categories of immigrants in Cyprus enjoy different entrance, residence and employment regimes, translated into various procedures regarding visas, residence permits and work permits. The differentiation of residence permits on categories of migrants (I 1) and the relationship between duration of stay and citizenship rights (I 1) constitute two dimensions that indicate a very strict control by the State on immigrants’ employment, and the construction of a hierarchy of priorities with regard to access to the labour market, that could in turn limit the application of different subsequent integration policies.

3 See FeMiPol Working paper 1.
The meanings given by the key informants to integration encompass the levels concerning both migrants and the host society. First, integration is regarded as a controlled and regulated process implemented through specific programmes concerning: Greek language skills, insertion of immigrant women in labour market, and programmes aiming to prepare Cypriot society to accept migrant women. As emphasised further on, the latter seems to be difficult to achieve. Moreover, factors influencing immigrants’ integration are discussed, such as the duration of stay in the host country and social mobility.

With regard to Cyprus as the host society, basic conditions of integration, such as tolerance and openness, and willingness to welcome immigrants are inexistent. Instead, xenophobic sentiments are very frequent as well as racist misconceptions, reflected more visibly in practices concerning the treatment of migrants by civil servants in the competent state authorities. Negative stereotypes and social prejudice constitute the ‘lenses’ through which migrant workers are perceived by public opinion discourses.

In these conditions, we discuss the question of integration in relation to the division between non-EU and EU migrant workers. According to key informants, because of their limited period of employment and therefore restrictive right to residence, in theory, the question of integration cannot concern the non-EU migrant workers. Instead the attention should focus mostly on the recognition and protection of their rights and liberties (I 6). Therefore, the possibilities for integration are significantly reduced for the categories of female migrant workers conditioned by the restriction of employment in Cyprus, such as the domestic workers and sex workers.

On the other hand, EU migrant workers are not constrained by restrictive regimes of residence and employment, and therefore could choose to settle and benefit from integration programmes.

In terms of immigration policy and integration policy, according to the key informants, there is a total lack of integration policies for immigrants, a situation that reflects the underdevelopment of the immigration policy domain in Cyprus. When asked about immigration policy in Cyprus, key informants agreed that this is a sphere that requires proper adjustment to current necessities, and therefore needs to be adapted and still designed to take into account different realities created by the Cyprus’ membership in the EU. The existing policy on immigration is defined as ad-hoc and fragmentary. Therefore, ‘the legislation follows practice and needs principle’ translates into the inexistence of any articulate approach understood as migration policy. Key informants emphasised the necessity for new legislation on immigration to envisage issues of immigrants’ integration such as: education, gender, police violence, racism and racist violence.

As regards immigration policy implementation and its consequences for integration processes, key informants said that the competent authorities do not implement the existing legislation on immigration properly. This phenomenon has as outcome the violation of immigrants’ rights and the creation of ‘undocumented migrants’. A case in point is that in practice, various categories of migrants do not have access to welfare benefits; moreover, there are asylum seekers left without legal papers due to a time-consuming bureaucracy.

A female participant emphasized that the immigration-related legislation and regulations have no gender dimension. Moreover, legislation and legal procedures in Cyprus are far from being neutral provided that they promote/enhance discrimination relative to gender and ethnicity in relation to groups of female migrants in Cyprus, i.e. domestic workers and cabaret workers. At the level of legislation implementation, the topic regarding the treatment of immigrant women by civil servants in the state authorities is addressed by most of the key informants.
They refer to discriminatory and racist behaviours of civil servants towards various categories of immigrant women such as domestic workers, cabaret workers and Pontian Greek women. All the references concerning this topic underline the marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged positions of immigrant women in Cyprus. Furthermore, practices regarding racial/colour discrimination against Asian and African persons exist at all the state authority levels.

The Cypriot environment of mainstream organisations for migrants is described as underdeveloped, very antagonistic and lacking cooperation among the mainstream organisations for migrants. Key informants invoked the existence of xenophobic resentments at the level of Cypriot society as a cause for the non-participation of Cypriots in the NGOs for migrants. However, little is mentioned about causes for the low level of migrants’ membership in organisations. In this sense, the negative reaction of state authorities that treat the NGOs for migrants with suspicion is mentioned as a cause for the non-involvement of both Greek-Cypriots and migrants in NGOs.

At the level of Cypriot society, key informants identified low levels of public awareness around EU policies on migration and public debates on European citizenship. In these circumstances, immigration-related EU directives appear to be marginalised and not considered as important as the EU economic policies (I 6).

There are two EU directives that are given great public importance in current public discourses due to the fact that they are of a major significance in the overall future policy regarding immigration to Cyprus. These are the EU directives concerning long-term residence and family reunification in relation to immigrants in Cyprus and have not been adopted yet despite the criticisms and pressure coming from the EU. The adoption of these two EU directives is ‘consciously’ delayed (I 6). Moreover, many concerns are expressed regarding their implementation in the Cypriot context that could be problematic, as long as these could lead to processes of exclusion concerning different categories of migrants, such as the undocumented migrants who cannot benefit from any regularisation procedures so far.
Appendix

(1) Definitions of immigrants- Categories of immigrants
-Recentness of immigration to Cyprus;
-'Old’ foreign workers; ‘new’ migrant workers, ‘real’ immigrants.

1.1. Categories of immigrants and legal papers and procedures
-Differentiation of residence permits on categories of migrants;
-Entrance visa procedures and limitations for third country citizens;
-Relationship duration of stay-citizenship rights;
-Special categories of third country nationals: cabaret workers on ‘artistes’ visa, non-EU citizens without entrance visa conditions.

1.2. Categories of migrant women: general considerations
-Un-unionised migrant women and consequences;
-Issues concerning legal status, employment, domestic violence and trafficking;
- The importance of educational level and place of residence in the process of migration.

1.3. Activities to assist diverse categories of female immigrants
-Psychological support and assistance with educational training, afternoon Greek language classes, access to procedures and mediating access to relevant services;
-Needs assessment for migrant women; the development of a feeling of belonging in organisations and encouragement of women migrants to take up activities; promoting cooperation between migrant and native women;
- The lack of access to welfare benefits and low economic resources are considered as real obstacles and difficulties when deploying activities targeting migrant women;
- General underdevelopment of social structures for migrants’ support.

1.4. Domestic workers
-Low wages and job unattractiveness for EU country citizens; expectations in relation to formal and informal salary increases;
-Relationship between limitations of the number of third country domestic workers and the inexistence of a structure providing social welfare services;
- Frequent complaints: work contract violations, bad treatment and sexual harassment;
- Runaway live-in domestics; social isolation and decision to run away;
- Employers of domestic workers; Unfavourable attitude towards their domestic workers’ membership to self-help associations; factors influencing behaviours of employers towards domestic workers;
- The relationship employer-domestic worker; difficulties in adjustment to work requirements, factors and characteristics of employers influencing the relationship; training in the sender country and implications for job requirements; the emotional investment in work;
- Meeting places/gatherings; unfavourable public perception;
- Negative stereotypes and public prejudice;
- Deskilling and downward social mobility;
- Social importance of domestic work.

1.5. Cabaret workers or ‘artistes’
-Arrival of cabaret workers from Eastern Europe;
-Conditions to obtain work permits: the eight-day visitor visa for medical
analyses; strictly limited employment periods;
-Cabaret workers as ‘danger’ for public health;
-Treatment of cabaret workers with positive medical results;
-Procedure for work permits; information about obligations and rights;
-Occasions to complain by cabaret workers;
-Dependence of cabaret workers on their employer.

1.6. Pontian Greeks in Cyprus
- Arrival of Pontian Greeks in Cyprus;
- Special residence status; ethnicity recognition claims- the acquisition of Greek citizenship;
- Categories of Pontian Greeks by citizenship and related discrimination;
- Dimensions of Pontian Greeks’ social integration; the necessity of integration programmes; segregated areas of residence; laws to eradicate segregation of schools; deskilling and initial downward social mobility of Pontian Greek women; tertiary degrees official recognition.
- Social mobility;
- Languages of first and second generations of Pontian Greeks;
- Problems with employment and language; the need for language courses;
- Assistance needed for Pontian Greek families’ adaptation to social and cultural environments.

1.7. Female refugees and asylum seekers
- Countries of origin; pregnant single women as refugees;
- Policy proposals and lobby for female asylum seekers by mainstream organisation;
- Gaps in implementation of asylum seekers’ rights;
- Improvement of implementations in legislation regarding refugees and political asylum seekers- gaps in implementation due to social prejudice;
- Applications for asylum not in concordance with specific criteria and suspicious treatment by state authorities;
- Limited right to employment in agriculture and farming.

1.8. Marriage and migrants
- Migrant workers as marriage migrants;
- Fake marriages and marriages of convenience;
- Suspicion of immigration authorities about mixed marriages;
- ‘Marriage migrants’: strategies to enter, stay and work in the country;
- Exploitation of female ‘marriage’ migrants: economic migrants and women in the sex industry;
- Perception of mixed marriages as problematic;
- Mixed marriages between Pontian Greeks and Greek-Cypriots as indicator of social acceptance and integration.

1.9. Undocumented immigrants
- Irregular immigrants: asylum seekers and illicit work;
- Lack of regularisation procedures for undocumented immigrants;
- Control of irregular immigration through constraints on the right to education of immigrants’ children;
- Visa overstaying: ‘illegal immigrants’ as a result of work contract expiration;
- Law limitations and the phenomenon of runaway domestics;
- Assistance provided to ‘illegal’ domestic workers by self-help associations;

- ‘Illegal’ domestic workers because they are not provided with a release paper.
(2) The phenomenon of cabaret-type venues in Cyprus: past and present
-Entertainment places with live music by orchestras and dancers;
-Dancers acquire new roles: emergence of ‘consommation’
  (in French)/consumption and prostitution paid by wealth men;
-Cabaret places frequented only by men for ‘consommation’ and prostitution;
-The introduction of recorded music and its consequences;
-Relationship between the consumption of alcoholic drinks in cabarets and
  trafficking;
-Replacement of cabaret workers’ role as artistic dancers and dancing pattern
  change;
-Sex workers coming on cabaret ‘artistes’ visas with the consent of state
  authorities;
-Flourishing period of cabarets and cabaret workers returning on ‘artistes’
  visa.

2.1. Relationship cabaret “artistes’- clients
-Men’s behaviour towards cabaret workers;
-Sexually transmissible diseases;
-Exchange/’love’ relationships ‘artistes’-clients;
-Cabaret consumption of alcoholic drinks/ ‘consommation’
-Native married men into relationships with cabaret workers.

2.2. Trafficking of women
-Trafficking and cabaret work; trafficking of cabaret workers; cabarets selling
  women-evidence for prosecution; trafficking by clients;
- Measures against trafficking: prosecution and shelters;
- Trafficking of women outside cabarets.

2.3. Assistance for victims of trafficking
-Categories of trafficking victims;
- Assistance by organisations; collaboration with international networks;
- Maltreatment of trafficking victims by the competent authority;
  confidentiality and legal procedures are not respected;
- Pressure exerted by the Commissioner for Administration.

2.4. Cabaret work and prostitution
-Prostitution by ‘consent’;
- Forms of prostitution;
- Demand side for cabaret workers;
- Professional and ‘innocent’ prostitution;
- Physical appearance of cabaret workers and native women’s negative
  reaction;
- Cabaret workers without medical insurance; beauty capital and hierarchy of
  cabaret workers;
- Characteristics of cabaret workers: education, motivations for working as
  ‘artistes’, nationalities, place of residence, competitive relationships among
  ‘artistes’.

2.5. Cabaret workers, prostitution and trafficking
-Sex workers coming on cabaret ‘artistes’ visa with the consent of state
  authorities;
- The penalisation of demand;
- Negotiations of prices paid for renting ‘artistes’;
- Prior information about cabaret work;
- Condition of work and stay;
Professional dancers working in cabarets.

(3) Mainstream NGOs for migrants and self-help associations by migrants

3.1. Self-help church association by female migrants (domestic workers)
- Expectations from the Filipina domestic workers’ organisation
- Assistance for runaway live-in domestics;
- Connection with Cypriot associations;
- Organisational structure by united teams called ‘unity’;
- Activities: assistance for newcomers, mediation with employers, counselling, legal advice, funds raisings.

3.2. Women’s organisation dealing with female immigrants (organisational aspects)
- Goals: to offer services to women, to help migrant women to set up their own self-help associations, to improve policies related to immigration;
- Access of migrant women to services;
- Short functioning period of the organisation;
- International participation and cooperation with other organisations;
- Low level participation of migrant women in the organisation;
- Larger environment description: connections with state agencies.

3.3. Environment of mainstream organisations for migrants
- Underdevelopment of civil society in Cyprus;
- Lack of cooperation among mainstream organisations for migrants; environment described as antagonistic;
- Request for assistance from mainstream organisations for migrants;
- Legislative proposals made by NGOs for migrants.

(4) Immigration policy. The Immigration Law
- Lack of proper policy on immigration; the existing policy is defined as fragmentary and ad-hoc;
- Law on immigration not adapted to current necessities;
- Project to change the immigration law;
- Slow procedures of legislative change.

4.1. Immigration legislation and gender dimension
- Immigration-related regulations have no gender dimension;
- Gender dimension of the general legislation and mechanisms for implementation;

4.2. Immigration-related EU directives
- The EU directive about long-term residence;
- The EU directive regarding family reunification;
- Lack of positive changes as a result of Cyprus becoming a member of the EU.

4.3. Immigration policy implementation
- Gap between policy and policy implementation;
- Problematic process of legislation implementation.

4.4. Rights of immigrants
- Proposal for the right of third country nationals to vote in political elections;
- Cypriot citizenship rights and the EU country citizens’ rights;
- Difficult access to medical services of non-EU Pontian Greek citizens;
- Strategy to obtain residence permit: domestic workers getting pregnant with native men;
- Medical insurance of domestic workers.

4.5. Treatment of migrant women by state authorities (and other public institutions)
- Ethnic discrimination - helpless domestic workers;
- Discrimination against domestic workers because of their status and ethnicity;
- Improper intervention of public authorities in cases concerning deaths of domestic workers;
- State authorities influenced by employers when domestic workers complain;
- Cabarets and cabaret workers as source of incomes for the State;
- State authorities react only if cabaret workers complain.
- Discriminatory behaviour of state authorities;
- Xenophobic treatment of migrants: unwillingness to integrate immigrants and negative perceptions prevailing at state authorities levels;
- Delays in the issuance procedure for residence permits.

4.6. Institutions dealing with migration in Cyprus
- Group of institutions dealing with migration in Cyprus;

4.7. Meanings of immigrants’ integration
- Integration as assistance in language learning;
- Integration of migrant women in labour market through implementation of programmes;
- Integration as connection with trade unions;
- Factors influencing integration: duration of stay in the host country and social mobility;
- Integration of non-EU and EU migrant women.

4.8. Language and orientation courses
- Practical considerations;
- Interest of Pontian Greeks in learning the Greek language.

References