

Press release, 13 January 2022

## **New TRAFIG study \ Lives in limbo and marginalisation: Protracted displacement in Greece and Italy**

Whereas attention to protracted displacement in developing countries has increased in international discourse, only few attempts have been made to link this debate to that on migrants' marginalisation and exclusion in Europe. Based on research in Greece and in Italy [TRAFIG working paper no. 9](#) shows that forced migrants experience conditions of protracted displacement in southern Europe that are shaped by migration, asylum and reception policies.

In contrast to common conceptions, protracted displacement often does not end when forced migrants have reached Europe. The authors of [TRAFIG working paper no. 9 "Figurations of Displacement in southern Europe"](#) found that prolonged uncertainty and vulnerability are key features in the lives of displaced people in Greece and Italy:

**"Our research in Greece revealed that many refugees and migrants continuously experience insecurity and exclusion, some even struggle to survive in extremely precarious conditions"**, co-author **Panos Hatziprokopiou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, explains. This also holds true for the situation in Italy – the first European country of arrival for many who cross the Mediterranean from North Africa. **"In Italy, around 500,000 undocumented migrants live at the margins of the legal, administrative and socio-economic system. They are probably the most vulnerable migrants in protracted displacement in the country"**, co-author **Ferruccio Pastore**, Director of FIERI, describes the situation in his country.

Restrictive governance regimes at the national and EU level do contribute decisively to migrants' legal insecurity and vulnerability. Policies also severely limit mobility opportunities within Greece and Italy and across the European Union. **"To cope with and resist marginalising and immobilising policies, displaced migrants in Italy and Greece are pushed to their limits and eventually forced to avoid, bypass or overcome the formal systems, also those that have been installed to help them"**, the authors point out.

Under such conditions, mobility emerges as a vital resource yet can also become a trap for displaced migrants, as the two-page [TRAFIG practice note no. 9 "Resolving the 'mobility paradox': Lessons from southern Europe"](#) that complements the working paper highlights. The authors point out that movements to other places or countries are common to connect to social networks and find livelihood opportunities. The problem is that this mobility is often on the fringes of or entirely outside the law. It leads to a 'mobility paradox' that, if left unresolved, severely limits migrants' short-term survival strategies and long-term perspectives to overcome protracted displacement.

Finally, [TRAFIG policy brief no. 6 "Moving on: How easing mobility restrictions within Europe can help forced migrants rebuild their lives"](#) builds on the empirical study conducted in Greece and Italy. The authors explain why mobility is important for displaced people and how it is being hampered by policies and practices. They also suggest strategic ways how policymakers can tap into the potential of mobility to provide additional solutions to protracted displacement in Europe.

You will find **TRAFIG working paper no. 9 "Figurations of Displacement in southern Europe"** (pdf) at: <https://trafig.eu/output/working-papers/trafig-working-paper-no-9/D064-TWP-Figurations-of-displacement-southern-Europe-Roman-et-al.-v01p-2021-12-6.pdf>

**TRAFIG practice note no. 9 “Resolving the ‘mobility paradox’: Lessons from southern Europe”** (pdf) at: [https://trafig.eu/output/practice-notes/trafig-practice-note-no-9/D065-TPN-Resolving-the-mobility-paradox-Hatziprokopiou-et-al\\_v01p\\_2022-1-11.pdf](https://trafig.eu/output/practice-notes/trafig-practice-note-no-9/D065-TPN-Resolving-the-mobility-paradox-Hatziprokopiou-et-al_v01p_2022-1-11.pdf)

and **TRAFIG policy brief no. 6 “Moving on: How easing mobility restrictions within Europe can help forced migrants rebuild their lives”** (pdf) at: <https://trafig.eu/output/policy-briefs/trafig-policy-brief-no-6/D062-TPB-Moving-on-Katsiaficas-et-al-v01p-2021-12-22.pdf>

The study was published in the framework of the EU-funded Horizon 2020 research project “Transnational Figurations of Displacement” (TRAFIG) which investigates long-lasting displacement situations at multiple sites in Asia, Africa and Europe and analyses options to improve displaced people’s lives. To read more about the EU-funded Horizon 2020 project TRAFIG, click [here](#).

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