



Fostering Migrants Employment in the Construction Sector

MITRUST

PR1 National Report – GREECE

FOSTERING MIGRANTS' EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



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Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1 Rationale of the MITRUST Project | 4 |
| 1.2 Purpose of the Study | 5 |
| 2. DESK RESEARCH IN GREECE | 6 |
| 2.1 Brief analysis of the current situation of the Construction sector in the country | 6 |
| 2.2 Employment of TCNs in the Construction Sector | 7 |
| 2.2.1 Historical Background of Immigration in Greece | 7 |
| 2.2.2 Overview of TCN’s population in Greece..... | 8 |
| 2.2.3 Employment of TCNs in the Construction sector | 10 |
| 2.2.4 Occupational profile and skillsets of TCNs | 11 |
| 2.2.5 Challenges for entering the Greek Labor Market..... | 13 |
| 2.3 Construction Market Skills Demands-Greece..... | 14 |
| 2.3.1 Construction Market Skills Demands | 14 |
| 2.3.2 Importance of tasks and skills of construction workers | 15 |
| 2.3.4 The zero-energy construction skills demand..... | 16 |
| 2.3.5 Occupational profiles of the construction sector | 17 |
| 3. FIELD RESEARCH IN GREECE | 18 |
| 3.1 Results from the online questionnaire for professionals | 18 |
| 3.2 Results from the online questionnaire for TCNs | 22 |
| 3.3 Results from the focus groups/interviews with professionals | 25 |
| 3.4 Results from the focus groups/interviews with TCNs | 27 |
| 4. Final Recommendations: Needs analysis | 29 |
| 4.1 Skills and gaps identified by professionals | 29 |
| 4.2 Occupational profile and gaps identified by TCNs..... | 30 |
| 4.3 Concluding Remarks | 31 |
| References | 33 |
| Annex 1: Questionnaire for TCNs data..... | 35 |
| Annex 2: Questionnaire for Professionals data | 41 |
| Annex 3: Data from focus groups/interviews with TCNs | 45 |
| Annex 4: Data from focus groups/interviews with professionals..... | 48 |



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the MITRUST Project

Construction is one of top 10 principal sectors of employment for migrants in EU and globally, since migrant workers can be found in considerable numbers in construction domains and thus their contribution to construction industry is important worldwide. However, according to the latest report of European Construction Sector Observatory (2020) there are several specific barriers to the training of building workers, which are linked with the lack of new technologies that support the access of migrant workers in training. Cultural and linguistic barriers may also pose a difficulty for attending training.

Thus, low-skilled migrant workers are at the risk of losing their jobs.

According to CEDEFOP, globalization and technological changes have affected the EU construction and building workers forced them equipped with new skills (technical, soft, language skills). For this reason, there is more need for VET support on this sector, while establishing partnerships between sectorial companies and VET providers is another important issue. However, as CEPS indicates there is still a lack of investment in skills training by construction companies, due to a variety of reasons (market failures, unaffordable costs, etc.). One more challenge should concern the construction industry is the informal experience migrant workers and their prior learning recognition.

Last, but not least, language learning of construction terminologies was happening on-the-job place and time until now. However, COVID19 impact has affected this type of learning due to the demand of keeping social distancing and working as remotely as possible.

The purpose of MITRUST project is to develop and deliver an innovative digital tool with the intention to support migrants who would like to work in the Construction Sector to acquire the necessary language competences, soft skills and proper behaviors in the construction site. the project focuses on targeted open and distance learning opportunities which will offer better career perspectives to migrants who want to be transferred in an EU country and to enter in construction industry labor market away from social exclusion and marginalization. Besides, access to learning offerings and enhancement of employability is one of the most efficient ways for Migrants' successful integration into the recipient EU societies.



1.2 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to develop a sound and updated insight of the Construction sector, based on the analysis of the construction industry, and the identification of the construction related job positions where migrants fit better. The study's objective is to investigate the actual employability or potential working opportunities within the sector and to provide a comprehensive and updated analysis in terms of the necessary language competences and skillset that meets market demand and current trends. Through an approach which examines construction specialties where migrants are mostly needed, and an analysis of soft and technical skills required by migrants, the study will define what kind of "intervention" is required (on language/soft or technical skills) improvement. The latter will build a strong basis for the identification of the User Specification Requirements that will guide the design and development of the Open Educational Resources tool in terms of learning and education offerings. Therefore, the study intends to map the existing context of the construction sector, to identify the skills gaps of TCNs and potential skills mismatches.

We will seek to verify and enrich our conclusions by inviting insights and feedback from a range of the target group in order to get a balanced, comprehensive and up-to-date overview. For this purpose, a comprehensive research methodology has been designed and implemented, combining both desk and field research.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the findings and results of both desk and field research that has been conducted in Greece.



2. DESK RESEARCH IN GREECE

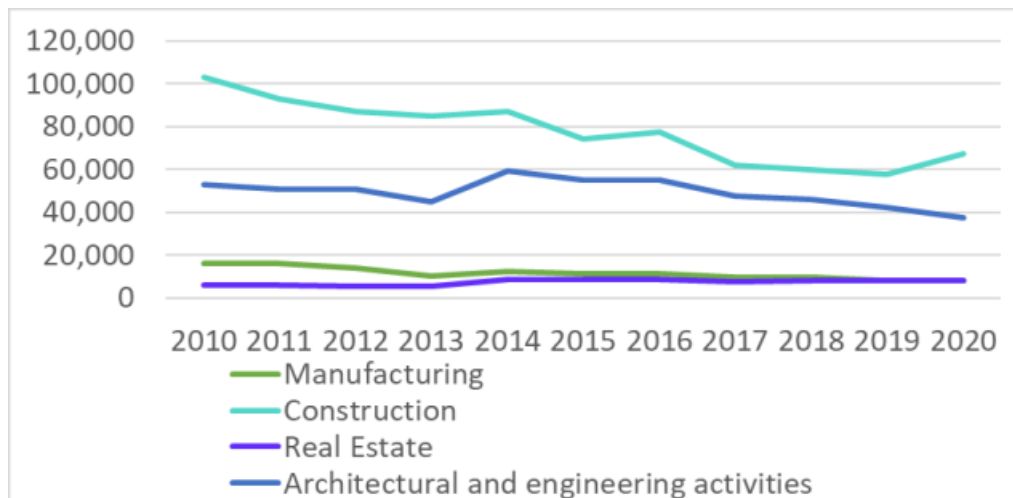
2.1 Brief analysis of the current situation of the Construction sector in the country

The Greek Construction sector is considered as **one of the most strategic pillars of the Greek economy** boosting economic performances in the country, as it is also the case in most EU countries.

The Greek construction sector experienced a period of significant and rapid rise (1990 – 2007) leading to establishment of engineering companies, design office and specialized technical staff and equipment. Nonetheless the deep economic crisis, showing its first signs in 2007 has led to the industry’s heavy shrinking with the broader sector’s added value falling by 51% in the period 2007-2017, from €22.4 billion in 2007 to €10.8 billion in 2017 (Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research, 2019).

As an example of the sector’s economic decline throughout the period of crisis, until the year 2017 when the Greek economic indicators recovered, the sector’s contribution to the country’s GDP decreased approximately by 5% (10% in 2007 to 5.2% in 2017) (Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research, 2019). Comparatively with other EU countries, in the year of recovery (2017) the contribution of the Construction sector to the GDP ranged 2.7% lower than the EU countries average.

With regards to the construction market as it can be observed by the table below, the total number of enterprises of the broad construction sector was of 120,734 in 2020 (European Construction Sector Observatory (ECSO), 2021), representing a sharp decrease (32.3%) compared to 2010. More concretely, all relevant subsectors (manufacturing, narrow construction, real estate, and architectural and engineering activities) experienced similar drops. On the contrary, the real estate activities sub-sector reported an increase of 42.4% in the number of enterprises, over the same period.



Source Eurostat, (2021)

In most recent years, and specifically in 2019, the evolution of the construction sector was particularly positive. The sector recorded a growth rate of 12.3%¹ compared to 7.9% in 2018. More recently, the Greek

¹ European Construction Industry Federation: <https://fiec-statistical-report.eu/greece#:~:text=ln%202019%2C%20the%20evolution%20of,compared%20to%207.9%25%20in%202018.>



construction sector's growth rate was of 15.2% in real terms in 2021, following an annual decline of 8.9% in 2020 (Business Wire, 2022), owing to pandemic's lockdown restrictions.

In 2020, the overall construction activity experienced an increase compared to 2019 in terms of the number of building permits (9.2%) and surface (9.2%). This positive development was also reflected in an increase in employment as the number of individuals employed in the construction sector was increased by 1.3% (FIEC 2021 Statistical Report Greece, 2021). The total number of individuals working in the broad construction sector was of 271,497 representing a 28.2% decrease (European Construction Sector Observatory (ECSO), 2021) since the early years of recession (2010). Furthermore, the sector's the total turnover reached to a figure of nearly €17.8 billion, representing a 4.2% increase from 2018, but 22.2% decline compared to 2010 (European Construction Sector Observatory (ECSO), 2021). According to the most relevant data issued by the Hellenic Statistical Authority², the Production index of the construction sector of the 4th quarter of 2021, compared to the corresponding indicator of the 4th quarter of 2020, showed an increase of 5.7% compared to a decrease of 1.0% in the respective comparison of the year 2020 with 2019.

According to the report on Greek economy for the first trimester of 2022 (Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research, 2022), published by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research, useful findings can be drawn regarding the sector's activity in 2021. Concretely, the data on total construction activities in 2021 indicate a significant increase of 26.9% in terms of the number of constructions permits while a higher increase has been recorded in terms of surface (47.4%) and volume (46.1%) respectively. It is however significant to note that business expectations for the specific sector remained unchanged. Similarly, expectations regarding the employment potentials for the specific sector remain stable without any decrease.

2.2 Employment of TCNs in the Construction Sector

2.2.1 Historical Background of Immigration in Greece

In the first half of 20th century Greece was considered mainly as a “sender” country due to the large numbers of Greek nationals emigrating in countries of Western Europe. In the early 90's, Greece was converted to a “hosting country” as it experienced its first mass migratory inflows as an outcome of the general improvement in quality of life due to unprecedented economic development (National Strategy for the integration of migrants and refugees, 2019, p. 14),the collapse of socialist regimes and the geopolitical changes in the region of Balkans and Eastern Europe (Frangiskou, et al., 2020). According to estimations, over a million of TCNs entered the country without documentation or overstayed their visa (Frangiskou et al. 2020) during the 90's. However, by the time heavy migratory inflows started, Greece lacked a structured and clear legislative framework to manage and regularize immigration in terms of social integration and labor market incorporation. On the contrary, the new then immigration legal

² Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT): <https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/8cff9110-8466-efd1-165c-5319358bca6e>



framework introduced in 1992 was characterized mainly by exclusionary measures aiming mainly to deter undocumented influxes, increase border controls and penalize undocumented residents in the Greek territory, establishing at the same time official deportation structures (Baldwin – Edwards, 2004, p.56). With regards to nationalities breakdown, according to the 2001 census, Albanian nationals represented most of the migratory flows during this decade (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004). Furthermore, during the first decade of 00's, Greece received high numbers of TCNs mainly from the regions of Africa, Southeast Asia and Middle – East which is considered as the second wave of migratory inflows (Fouskas, et al., 2018) . Additionally, during the period 2014 – 2019, due to country's geographical proximity with Turkey, Greece has served as the main corridor for mass arrivals receiving an unprecedented number of TCN's composed by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers originating mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran in a situation perceived as "refugee crisis" which affected also other EU member countries and specifically those of Northern Europe.

2.2.2 Overview of TCN's population in Greece

According to the most recently published data by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in March 2022(Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022), a total of 669,497 third country nationals reside in the Greek territory under a legal residence status. It must be noted, that this figure concerns solely documented third country nationals with a valid residence permit without including recognized refugees. According to the same source, the number of recognized refugees in Greece is of 58,245. These figures do not include however, the number of asylum seekers being hosted in Greece, which is estimated to be approximately of 31,500 (Greek Council for Refugees and Save the Children International, Bimonthly Report, 2022).

In terms of nationality, the population of third country nationals is distributed as follows: The vast majority of TCNS with a valid residence permit are Albanian nationals with a figure quite far from the rest of nationalities (Georgia, China, Pakistan and Ukraine) . More concretely:

| Top ten nationalities of Third Country Nationals with valid residence permits | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------|---------|
| 1 | ALBANIA | 418.938 | 62,58% |
| 2 | GEORGIA | 29.480 | 4,40% |
| 3 | CHINA | 26.764 | 4,00% |
| 4 | PAKISTAN | 25.408 | 3,80% |
| 5 | UKRAINE | 20.711 | 3,09% |
| 6 | RUSSIA | 18.767 | 2,80% |
| 7 | INDIA | 15.974 | 2,39% |
| 8 | EGYPT | 14.326 | 2,14% |
| 9 | PHILIPPINES | 12.817 | 1,91% |
| 10 | BANGLADESH | 12.142 | 1,81% |
| | OTHER NATIONALITIES | 74.170 | 11,08% |
| | TOTAL | 669.497 | 100,00% |

Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Monthly Report on Legal Migration, March 2022 (Annex B) . Available at: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>



With regards to the nationality breakdown of recognized refugees, the majority of refugees originate from Syria and Afghanistan. More information can be found in the table below for the top 5 countries of origin:

| TOP 5 Nationalities with valid residence permit due to refugee or international protection status- March 2022 | |
|--|---------------|
| NATIONALITY | NUMBER |
| Syria | 21.701 |
| Afghanistan | 15.061 |
| Iraq | 5.692 |
| Palestinian Territories | 4.127 |
| Somalia | 2.504 |
| Other | 9.160 |
| TOTAL | 58.245 |

Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Monthly Report on Legal Migration, March 2022,Annex B. Available at: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>

No official data published by the Greek state has been found available regarding the number of undocumented third country nationals. In general, the total number of third country nationals is estimated at a figure of approximately 1.200.000 (Global Immigration Detention Observatory, 2019). In the same vein, the official report published by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2021) corroborates the above mentioned figures as it can be seen in the table below, as the sum of candidate countries (CC), very high developed (VHDC), high developed (HDC), Medium developed (MDC) and Low Developed (LDC) Non – EU countries exceeds a million (1.026.634).

ESTIMATED POPULATION BY SEX, GROUP OF COUNTRY OF BIRTH AND AGE GROUP ON 1ST JANUARY OF 2021

| | TOTAL | GR | EU * | EFTA * | CC * | VHDC * | HDC * | MDC * | LDC * |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 10.678.632 | 9.316.912 | 330.377 | 4.709 | 357.382 | 79.913 | 244.052 | 215.070 | 130.217 |
| 0-4 | 453.966 | 429.841 | 1.687 | 64 | 1.847 | 668 | 777 | 15.314 | 3.768 |
| 5-9 | 499.640 | 467.158 | 3.929 | 99 | 665 | 1.198 | 1.341 | 17.220 | 8.030 |
| 10-14 | 557.130 | 530.794 | 3.708 | 66 | 5.573 | 923 | 1.459 | 9.338 | 5.269 |
| 15-19 | 548.300 | 499.577 | 9.018 | 88 | 9.000 | 1.503 | 3.888 | 10.227 | 14.999 |
| 20-24 | 563.050 | 478.514 | 18.890 | 155 | 12.533 | 3.416 | 11.129 | 15.673 | 22.740 |
| 25-29 | 557.873 | 463.146 | 14.951 | 235 | 16.703 | 4.285 | 16.574 | 21.622 | 20.357 |
| 30-34 | 586.014 | 472.786 | 24.180 | 309 | 29.053 | 7.458 | 16.211 | 20.097 | 15.920 |



| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|---------|--------|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 35-39 | 699.931 | 571.718 | 38.575 | 528 | 35.076 | 10.974 | 15.650 | 15.450 | 11.960 |
| 40-44 | 797.084 | 645.356 | 49.594 | 746 | 44.592 | 15.017 | 18.622 | 14.070 | 9.087 |
| 45-49 | 792.873 | 624.334 | 48.172 | 877 | 53.253 | 14.407 | 29.770 | 15.862 | 6.198 |
| 50-54 | 807.051 | 662.710 | 33.714 | 440 | 46.847 | 8.136 | 34.663 | 16.121 | 4.420 |
| 55-59 | 720.269 | 613.906 | 27.919 | 266 | 30.330 | 4.257 | 28.082 | 12.924 | 2.585 |
| 60-64 | 687.595 | 607.770 | 23.303 | 263 | 21.420 | 3.325 | 19.951 | 9.749 | 1.814 |
| 65-69 | 615.308 | 556.072 | 18.302 | 322 | 15.661 | 2.233 | 13.131 | 8.250 | 1.337 |
| 70-74 | 570.239 | 529.886 | 8.781 | 140 | 11.415 | 1.117 | 13.025 | 5.024 | 851 |
| 75-79 | 446.605 | 423.385 | 2.809 | 47 | 7.214 | 400 | 9.117 | 3.244 | 389 |
| 80-84 | 389.016 | 373.239 | 1.339 | 31 | 4.566 | 423 | 6.348 | 2.688 | 382 |
| 85+ | 386.688 | 366.720 | 1.506 | 33 | 11.634 | 173 | 4.314 | 2.197 | 111 |

(Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, Estimated Population by sex, Group of Country of Birth and Age Group at 1st January (2009 - 2021))

*EU = EU Countries, EFTA = European Free Trade Association Countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland), CC = Candidate Countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey), VHDC = Very High Developed Non-EU Countries, HDC = High Developed Non-EU Countries, MDC = Medium Developed Non-EU Countries, LDC = Low Developed Non-EU Countries.

2.2.3 Employment of TCNs in the Construction sector

Over years, due to the significant development of constructions in Greece, the construction sector has been representing one of the main industries where TCNs have been employed as it provided opportunities for unskilled labor, while jobs in this sector are generally considered low – paid and are not attractive to Greek nationals (Frangiskou, et al., 2020, p.47). Nonetheless, the fact that this sector has been providing labor openings does not entail formal employment as in numerous cases, individuals are being recruited through structures of informal economy and undeclared labor. In the Greek society, there is a significant tolerance in the employment of clandestine workers as most household renovations and maintenance jobs are carried out by unregistered contractors (EU Commission Report on undeclared labor in Greece, 2020). According to recent studies based on data of the 2011 national census, approximately the 1/3 of migrant population has been employed in the construction sector, working mainly as unskilled workers (Frangiskou, et al., 2020, p. 54). More recent data, published by the National Social Security Institution (EFKA in Greek) in March 2021, indicate that out the such figure is actually higher as out of the total number of individuals insured in the domain of constructions 48,9% originate from a country outside EU. Concretely, out of the total number of insured third country nationals, the vast majority (42,5 %) is of Albanian citizenship (National Social Security Institution , Monthly Report, March 2021). It must be noted that these figures concern exclusively documented labor without providing estimations on potential numbers of unauthorized employment in the sector.



MARCH 2021
TABLE 3 : ENTERPRISES & CONSTRUCTIONS
DISTRIBUTION OF INSURED POPULATION BY NATIONALITY

| Nationality | NATIONALITY CODE | Number of Insured Individuals in Enterprises ⁽¹⁾ | | | | Number of Insured Individuals in Constructions ⁽¹⁾ | | | | Total Insured Population ⁽¹⁾ | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|---|------------------|------------------|-------------|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | | Males | Females | Total | % | Males | Females | Total | % | Males | Females | Total | % |
| Greece | GR | 1.008.661 | 937.805 | 1.946.466 | 90,55 | 20.360 | 207 | 20.567 | 48,85 | 1.029.021 | 938.012 | 1.967.033 | 89,75% |
| Albania | AL | 57.005 | 36.866 | 93.871 | 4,37 | 17.789 | 116 | 17.905 | 42,53 | 74.794 | 36.982 | 111.776 | 5,10% |
| Pakistan | PK | 18.587 | 95 | 18.682 | 0,87 | 486 | 2 | 488 | 1,16 | 19.073 | 97 | 19.170 | 0,87% |
| Romania | RO | 3.973 | 5.153 | 9.126 | 0,42 | 661 | 10 | 671 | 1,59 | 4.634 | 5.163 | 9.797 | 0,45% |
| Bangladesh | BD | 8.492 | 104 | 8.596 | 0,40 | 45 | 0 | 45 | 0,11 | 8.537 | 104 | 8.641 | 0,39% |
| Bulgaria | BG | 3.236 | 5.170 | 8.406 | 0,39 | 111 | 5 | 116 | 0,28 | 3.347 | 5.175 | 8.522 | 0,39% |
| Georgia | GE | 2.507 | 3.527 | 6.034 | 0,28 | 294 | 4 | 298 | 0,71 | 2.801 | 3.531 | 6.332 | 0,29% |
| India | IN | 5.180 | 430 | 5.610 | 0,26 | 55 | 0 | 55 | 0,13 | 5.235 | 430 | 5.665 | 0,26% |
| Egypt | EG | 5.137 | 251 | 5.388 | 0,25 | 975 | 5 | 980 | 2,33 | 6.112 | 256 | 6.368 | 0,29% |
| Russian Federation | RU | 1.252 | 3.497 | 4.749 | 0,22 | 107 | 3 | 110 | 0,26 | 1.359 | 3.500 | 4.859 | 0,22% |
| Ukraine | UA | 1.061 | 2.845 | 3.906 | 0,18 | 79 | 3 | 82 | 0,19 | 1.140 | 2.848 | 3.988 | 0,18% |
| Poland | PL | 982 | 1.709 | 2.691 | 0,13 | 128 | 3 | 131 | 0,31 | 1.110 | 1.712 | 2.822 | 0,13% |
| China | CN | 1.455 | 1.186 | 2.641 | 0,12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 1.455 | 1.186 | 2.641 | 0,12% |
| Philippines | PH | 1.164 | 1.473 | 2.637 | 0,12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 1.164 | 1.473 | 2.637 | 0,12% |
| Cyprus | CY | 1.292 | 1.240 | 2.532 | 0,12 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0,00 | 1.293 | 1.240 | 2.533 | 0,12% |
| Moldova | MD | 600 | 1.225 | 1.825 | 0,08 | 63 | 1 | 64 | 0,15 | 663 | 1.226 | 1.889 | 0,09% |
| Armenia | AM | 801 | 931 | 1.732 | 0,08 | 54 | 0 | 54 | 0,13 | 855 | 931 | 1.786 | 0,08% |
| United Kingdom | GB | 788 | 889 | 1.677 | 0,08 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 788 | 889 | 1.677 | 0,08% |
| Italy | IT | 969 | 631 | 1.600 | 0,07 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0,01 | 972 | 631 | 1.603 | 0,07% |
| Syrian arab republic | SY | 1.132 | 154 | 1.286 | 0,06 | 220 | 1 | 221 | 0,52 | 1.352 | 155 | 1.507 | 0,07% |
| Germany | DE | 460 | 687 | 1.147 | 0,05 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0,01 | 463 | 687 | 1.150 | 0,05% |
| Afghanistan | AF | 1.013 | 80 | 1.093 | 0,05 | 84 | 0 | 84 | 0,20 | 1.097 | 80 | 1.177 | 0,05% |
| Turkey | TR | 719 | 321 | 1.040 | 0,05 | 11 | 0 | 11 | 0,03 | 730 | 321 | 1.051 | 0,05% |
| France | FR | 469 | 462 | 931 | 0,04 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 469 | 462 | 931 | 0,04% |
| Tunisia | TN | 541 | 375 | 916 | 0,04 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0,01 | 544 | 375 | 919 | 0,04% |
| Nigeria | NG | 581 | 215 | 796 | 0,04 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0,01 | 584 | 215 | 799 | 0,04% |
| Iraq | IQ | 634 | 91 | 725 | 0,03 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 0,07 | 662 | 91 | 753 | 0,03% |
| Islamic republic of Iran | IR | 565 | 118 | 683 | 0,03 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0,02 | 573 | 118 | 691 | 0,03% |
| OTHERS | | 6.800 | 5.928 | 12.728 | 0,59 | 169 | 1 | 170 | 0,40 | 6.969 | 5.929 | 12.898 | 0,59% |
| TOTAL FOREIGNERS | | 127.395 | 75.653 | 203.048 | 9,45 | 21.380 | 154 | 21.534 | 51,15 | 148.775 | 75.807 | 224.582 | 10,25% |
| TOTAL | | 1.136.056 | 1.013.458 | 2.149.514 | 100 | 41.740 | 361 | 42.101 | 100 | 1.177.796 | 1.013.819 | 2.191.615 | 100,00% |

(Source: National Social Security Institution, EFKA, Monthly Employment Data, March 2021)

It is noteworthy that before the economic crisis in Greece, the migrant workforce was, to a large extent, employed in specific economic sectors characterized by 'labour-intensive' production (Constructions & Manufacturing for men and household services for women) (Zacharopoulos, Gabroglou, Kaminioti, & Paidousi, 2017, p.194). More concretely, one year before the economic recession (2008) ,51.4% of male TCNs was employed in constructions while 19, 7% in manufacturing (Zacharopoulos, Gabroglou, Kaminioti, & Paidousi, 2017, p.186). According to the same source, the categorization of TCNs based on their occupation, concerned mainly skilled technicians (56%) while a figure of 20.6% concerned unskilled workers, elementary occupations, and manual labor workers. As the economic crisis has hit hard construction companies, TCNs as one of the most vulnerable groups in the country, have experienced the most dramatic impact in terms of their social and employment status.

2.2.4 Occupational profile and skillsets of TCNs

In general, data and literature on TCN skillsets are scarce as not much research has been conducted in this field yet. The majority of the collected information and literature comes from official reports issued by state authorities and research institutes' studies in the topics of employment and labor market integration



under predefined categories or professions as also of NGOs reports focusing mainly on the barriers and challenges of TCNs in terms of their level of social integration (especially related with obstacles and challenges).

The table below issued by National Social Security Institution illustrates some interest facts regarding the occupational profile of Third Country Nationals in the country. The prominence of TCN's occupation in the professions of unskilled laborers, manual laborers and small professionals is evident, both for Albanian origin individuals and other Non – EU nationalities. More concretely, as the data from National Social Security Institution indicates, in March 2021, 52,7 % of insured Albanian nationals were employed in unskilled or manual labor positions while the respective percentage for other non - EU nationalities is of 44, 5 %. Similarly, the figures related with skilled labor are also high (nearly 10% for each of the below-mentioned categories). Drawing a comparison between the figures of Greek nationals and TCNs, it can be observed that there are considerable differences among them. Concretely, the percentages of Albanian and other third country nationals in the above-mentioned occupation categories are significantly higher compared to those of the Greek nationals showing that there are established occupational pathways for migrant workforce in Greece through specific labor market structures leading to concrete working opportunities and respective financial remunerations. Although in significantly lower percentages, the same applies also for the occupational category of skilled laborers.

MARCH 2021
TABLE 6 : ENTERPRISES & CONSTRUCTIONS
DISTRIBUTION OF INSURED POPULATION BY OCCUPATION & NATIONALITY

| OCCUPATION | | Greece | % | EU Countries | % | Albania | % | Others | % | Σύνολο Total | % |
|---|---|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Legislators and senior officials | 1 | 12.570 | 0,64 | 240 | 0,73 | 22 | 0,02 | 175 | 0,22 | 13.007 | 0,59 |
| Scientific, artistic and related professions | 2 | 168.550 | 8,57 | 1.582 | 4,82 | 322 | 0,29 | 1.514 | 1,89 | 171.968 | 7,85 |
| Physical and engineering science associate professionals | 3 | 199.996 | 10,17 | 1.486 | 4,53 | 1.459 | 1,31 | 1.699 | 2,12 | 204.640 | 9,34 |
| Office clerks | 4 | 528.145 | 26,85 | 8.681 | 26,44 | 6.015 | 5,38 | 9.881 | 12,36 | 552.722 | 25,22 |
| Provision of services, and Salespersons in stores and outdoor markets | 5 | 411.691 | 20,93 | 6.912 | 21,05 | 22.788 | 20,39 | 16.099 | 20,13 | 457.490 | 20,87 |
| Specialized farmers, foresters, fishermen and cattlemans | 6 | 5.734 | 0,29 | 82 | 0,25 | 1.003 | 0,90 | 393 | 0,49 | 7.212 | 0,33 |
| Skilled laborers | 7 | 118.236 | 6,01 | 2.259 | 6,88 | 11.000 | 9,84 | 7.391 | 9,24 | 138.886 | 6,34 |
| Stationery-plant and related operators | 8 | 156.599 | 7,96 | 1.654 | 5,04 | 8.309 | 7,43 | 3.897 | 4,87 | 170.459 | 7,78 |
| Unskilled laborers, manual laborers and small professionals | 9 | 267.787 | 13,61 | 9.008 | 27,43 | 59.003 | 52,79 | 35.642 | 44,57 | 371.440 | 16,95 |
| Armed forces | 0 | 259 | 0,01 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0,00 | 259 | 0,01 |
| Unknown | | 97.466 | 4,95 | 933 | 2,84 | 1.855 | 1,66 | 3.278 | 4,10 | 103.532 | 4,72 |
| TOTAL | | 1.967.033 | 100,00 | 32.837 | 100,00 | 111.776 | 100,00 | 79.969 | 100,00 | 2.191.615 | 100,00 |

(Source: National Social Security Institution, EFKA, Monthly Employment Data, March 2021)

In relation to TCNs' skillset, a recent research (HumanRights360, 2021) focusing on the attitudes of employers regarding the employment of TCNs (migrants and refugees), highlighted the most essential positive soft skills that TCN's present working in Greek companies:



- Flexibility
- Willingness
- Hard work
- Willingness to succeed

Additionally, the knowledge of Greek language is considered essential as an ability for effective communication to ensure smooth cooperation in the working environment. Therefore, language skills are considered of a complementary importance and not a harsh criterion. However, according to the findings long – term residence and formed ties with the country (e.g. family, knowledge of the language) enhance the reliability of TCN candidates to employers.

Another qualitative research (MILE AMIF Project, 2019) focusing on the perspective of employers from ten different industries regarding the main barriers for recruiting TCNs have provided significant findings: More specifically, low language skills, high training needs, limited employability skills (such as interview skills) and inexistent or limited working experience in Greece were the main constraints identified by employers for hiring TCNs. Furthermore, under to the same research³, according to the employers' perspective, the top – 7 relevant soft skills of TCNs indicated by Greek employers were:

- Resilience
- Professionalism
- Structured working style
- Team working
- Conflict management
- Willingness to learn
- Critical Thinking

2.2.5 Challenges for entering the Greek Labor Market

In general terms, according to the Greek National Integration Strategy “third-country nationals continue to face barriers in the education system, the labor market and access to decent housing being therefore increased risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to citizens of host countries,” even when working. One of the greatest challenges TCNs face related with the difficulties in entering into the labor market.

The main challenges (Schlag, 2021,p.7) identified for entering the Greek labor market concern:

- The general economic circumstances because of the long – lasting financial crisis during the years of 2009 – 2016.
- The considerable high level of connection of the labor market on formal education
- The non – existence of frameworks for providing entrance into the labor market through internships and on – the job training because of specifically designed integration policies.
- The incapability of meeting the required skills by the employers

These challenges might be less critical based on the type and status of a job, but they can become more severe when it comes to high skilled employment.

³ Listing only skills rated relevant by 50% or more respondents. Project MILE. (2019). Voices Of European Employers: Challenges And Benefits Of The Inclusion Of Migrants In The Labour Market <https://projectmile.eu/library/>



Therefore, apart from the primary integration difficulties that TCNs face, irrespective of their legal status (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers), which are linked with the lack of language skills, precarious entry conditions in the host country, lack of networks and potential discrimination/stigmatization, TCNs in Greece face significant limitations in finding official employment. As a result, they are pushed towards informal economy and undeclared work where they can remain for a considerable period (Fouskas, et al., 2018) . By being immersed in the structures of shadow economy, TCNs apart from working in an environment outside of state labor inspections and labor rights, exposed in precarious working conditions with low – paid and quite often cash in hand wages, do not enjoy any type of social benefits or healthcare. These conditions have been aggravated during and after the economic crisis as the opportunities of TCNs for finding a paid employment with social security contributions have become much more limited (Frangiskou, et al., 2020, p.189).

In the Greek context, TCNs tend to be employed in secondary and non – attractive jobs which are not covered by the Greek nationals as they are considered of low – prestige and low – paid. As shown in the tables above, the construction domain concentrates relatively high number of TCNs workers while undeclared work has been a very common practice within this sector (EU Commission Report, 2020).

Additionally, one of the most essential obstacles for TCNs integration in the Greek labor market is related with the difficulties of recognition of their academic qualifications, formal skills, and previous job experience (Schlag, 2021, p.9) acquired in their countries of origin that would assist them in finding a better job in terms of wages, working conditions and stability. Such recognition is considered as a crucial element for accessing labor market in more favorable terms and thus achieve higher levels of social integration (Frangiskou, et al., 2020, p.145). Therefore, migrants rely on their informal social networks for gaining labor market orientation and information regarding job opportunities (MILE, AMIF Project, 2019).

According to recent studies and qualitative surveys, achieving a good command of Greek language skills is considered as the most essential priority for TCNs’ improvement of their socioeconomic status. The National Integration Strategy (2019) reflects this belief, stipulating that good command of Greek language is the cornerstone for their incorporation into the Greek society. In Greece, there are Greek language learning courses for TCNs provided by governmental programs, however, most of the programs are provided by NGOs through non – formal education structures. The same applies also in the sector of vocational training programs.

It is noteworthy that the completion of this type of non – formal education programs does not guarantee better and mote possibilities in entering the labor market as formal education credentials and certificates are not replaceable making official validation of skills of utmost importance (Schlag, 2021,p.10).

2.3 Construction Market Skills Demands-Greece

2.3.1 Construction Market Skills Demands

Constructions is a demanding occupational sector that prerequisites a combination of physical and soft skills. *Indeed*, the most well-known hiring platform in the world, reports that there are ten main skills



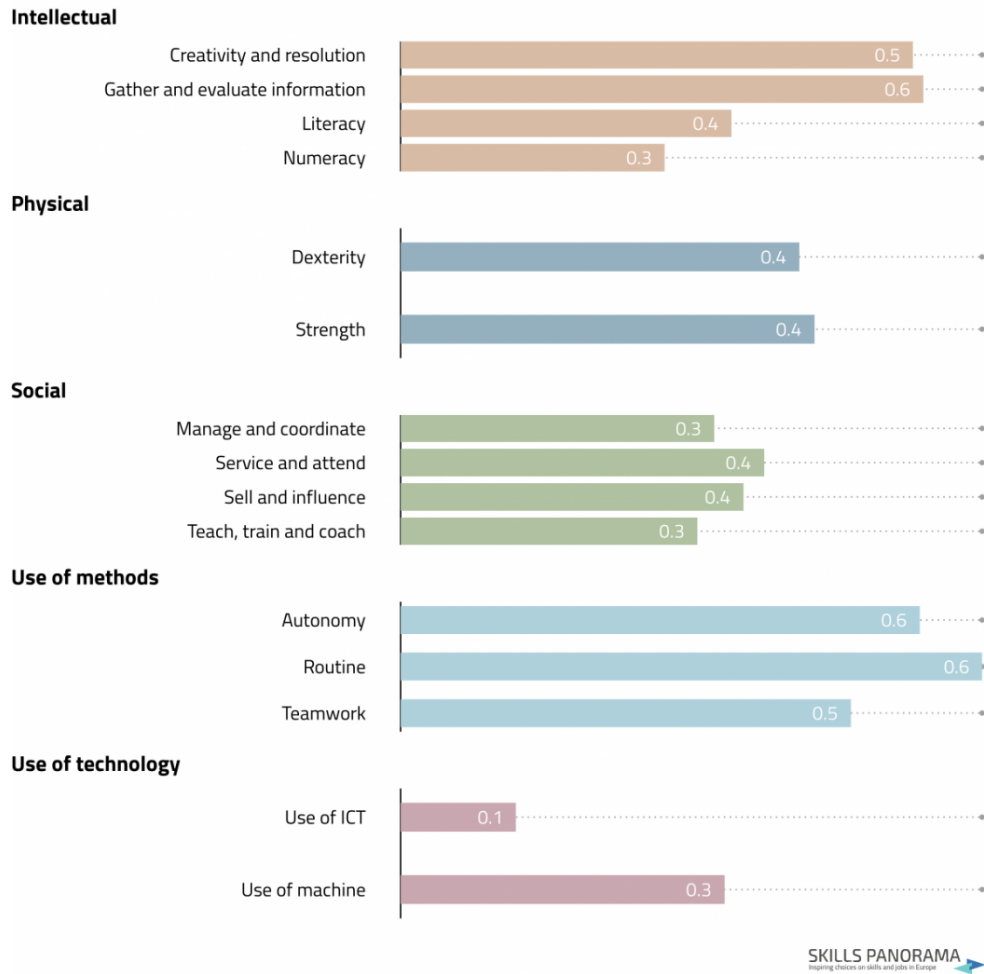
being required by construction employers covering a wide range of occupational profiles of the construction sector, which are listed as follows:

- Safety procedures and Personal Protective Equipment
- Communication skills
- Growth mindset
- Critical thinking
- Literacy and numeracy
- Technological skills
- Time management
- Organization
- Physical strength and stamina
- Attention to detail⁴

2.3.2 Importance of tasks and skills of construction workers

The figure created based on the research of *Skills Panorama* by CEDEFOP categorizes the essential tasks and skills of the construction sector in five general categories, intellectual, physical, social, use of methods, and use of technology.⁵ According to the chart, creativity, resolution, routine, teamwork, and evaluation of information are considered essential construction skills for people working in the construction sector without constraining the categorization of skills to a specific construction specialty.

⁵ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/data-insights/construction-workers-skills-opportunities-and-challenges-2019-update#_t
(CEDEFOP, 2019 update)



Source: Skills Panorama, CEDEFOP

2.3.4 The zero-energy construction skills demand

The construction sector is also constantly affected by environmental changes, leading to a series of increases in skills demands. At the beginning of 2022, the European Commission, having reported the challenges emerging, launched the Pact for Skills⁶ for the construction sector under the broader framework of EU Skills Pact initiative of the European Skills Agenda, launched in July 2020. The partnership's foremost goal is the upskilling and reskilling of at least 25% of the construction workers, equal to three million workers for the next five years, and their thorough training in the energy standards and circular economy digitalization.⁷ The development of the construction sector aims to ensure the alignment of the actions with the EU's renovation wave and to model a resilient and attractive construction sector. Consequently, the construction sector prerequisites well-educated workers to be engaged with climate challenges and demands.

⁶A Pact for Skills in Construction by the EU sectoral Social Partners, 2022

⁷ Re-skilling programme for workers in the construction sector, 2022



In this vein, the training of all construction workers in zero-energy building standards (NZEB) is becoming mandatory. The EU's BUILD UP Skills is an initiative striving to upskill the current and forthcoming construction workers so as to align them with green construction practices ensuring energy-efficient constructions and renovations.⁸ Thus, the design and development of upskilling and reskilling construction programs are getting a high priority for all EU Member States.

Under the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulation, the Greek government developed the programme "Economize at Home"⁹, which is financed by the National Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development (ERDF) and national resources. The design of the programme considers the integrated energy saving intervention in the residential building sector and aims to reduce the energy needs of buildings, the emissions of pollutants that contribute to the worsening of the greenhouse effect and achieving a cleaner environment. The programme strives to provide incentives for energy saving interventions in the residential building sector, it is implemented on a yearly basis and has forced construction companies to upskill and reskill their construction workforce.

The rapid increase of environmental demands in conjunction with the existing and future growth of the Greek construction sector by 2040, has been emphasized by construction professionals in Greece¹⁰ and will lead the sector to high success. However, the main obstacle is the lack of human resources and well-educated workforce corresponding to the societal and environmental changes and challenges. Thus, a thorough construction training in current construction skills is considered of utmost importance.

2.3.5 Occupational profiles of the construction sector

Given that the construction sector is comprised of many and diverse occupational specialties, the specific skills needed might be diverse.

As far as the craft and related trades workers are concerned, the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)¹¹ reports that there are five main occupational profiles, which are: 1) the building and related trades workers, metal, machinery and related trades workers, 2) the handicraft and printing workers, 3) the electrical and electronics trades workers and the food processing, 4) woodworking, garment and other craft and related trades workers. In particular, the craft and trades' occupation are classified in five major subgroups including a range of occupational profiles, which are related to building and related trades workers, metal and machinery workers, handicraft and printing workers, electrical and electronics workers, and last but not least, the woodworking and food processing.

⁸Construction skills: Equipping building professionals with new skills to achieve European energy targets, 2019

⁹ <https://exoikonomo2021.gov.gr/to-programma>

¹⁰ <https://buildexpogreece.com/synteyxi-toy-k-g-metzelopoyloy-proedroy-tis-ellinikis-enosis-aloyminioy/>

¹¹ <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification/occupation?uri=http://data.europa.eu/esco/isco/C7#overlayspin>



The first subcategory, the building, and related trades workers is related to the construction, maintenance, and repairment of buildings, structures, and walls, erecting frameworks, shaping stone for installation, or using other similar materials for the construction process. Regarding the metal and machinery workers, the work is more related to handwork or specific tools to reduce the physical effort and time needed for casting, welding, and shaping the metal. The fourth subcategory, the electrical and electronic workers, is related to the maintenance and adjustments of electrical and electronic wiring systems, examination of blueprints, and wiring specifications. With regards to the Greek context the occupational profiles mentioned above have been analyzed by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance¹²(EOPPEP), which has formed an outline for the necessary knowledge and skills needed in a high number of specialties. However, the outline is associated with occupational profiles that set as a prerequisite a certified and specialized education and training. As far as the occupational profiles of the construction sector is concerned, some of the primary horizontal skills reported for implementing the daily tasks of these profiles at a basic level are speed, concentration, numerical ability, good memory, physical strength, taking initiatives, and information management.

These professions are mostly associated with technical and practical knowledge and competencies since the construction workers predominantly focus on the construction and maintenance of the buildings. In particular, they work in metal formation, metal structures erection, and machines repairing, and their occupation require level 2 of the ISCO level¹³.

The data collected illustrate that soft skills are the most crucial working skills in the construction sector. Employers are searching for people that will be adaptable, resilient, and handworkers, even if there is an increasing demand for highly skilled construction professionals. It has to be noted though that there is quite limited bibliography regarding the most demanding occupational profiles of the sector, the skills needed and the gaps in a country level.

3. FIELD RESEARCH IN GREECE

3.1 Results from the online questionnaire for professionals

During the implementation of project result 1, data was collected by ten professionals working in different fields of the construction sector and having a valuable experience in the current state of construction in Greece. A total of 17 questions were asked, and the results are summarized as follows:

- As far as the occupational profile of respondents is concerned, 60% were professionals working in the construction sector, 30% were VET trainers/tutors, and 10% were individuals working in the financial department of a construction company. More specifically, the majority of the professionals working in the construction sector were civil engineers and in terms of their

¹² <https://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/structure-and-program-certification/workings/katalogos-ep?start=2>

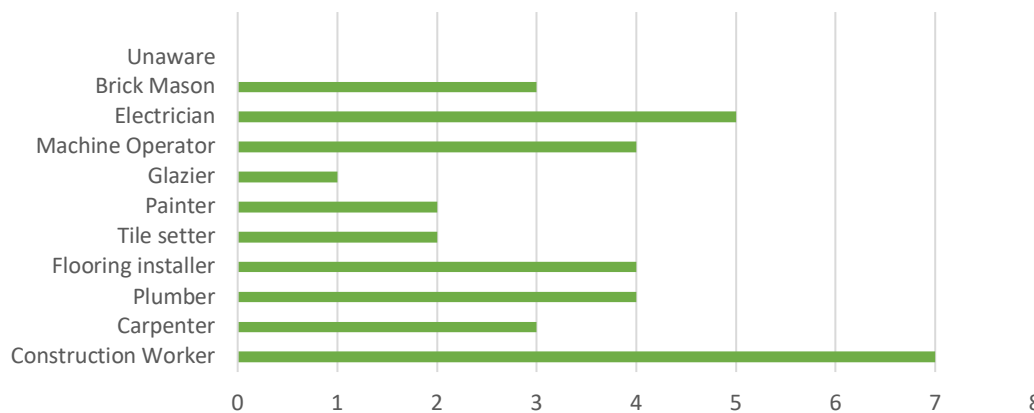
¹³ <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/classification-occupation/>



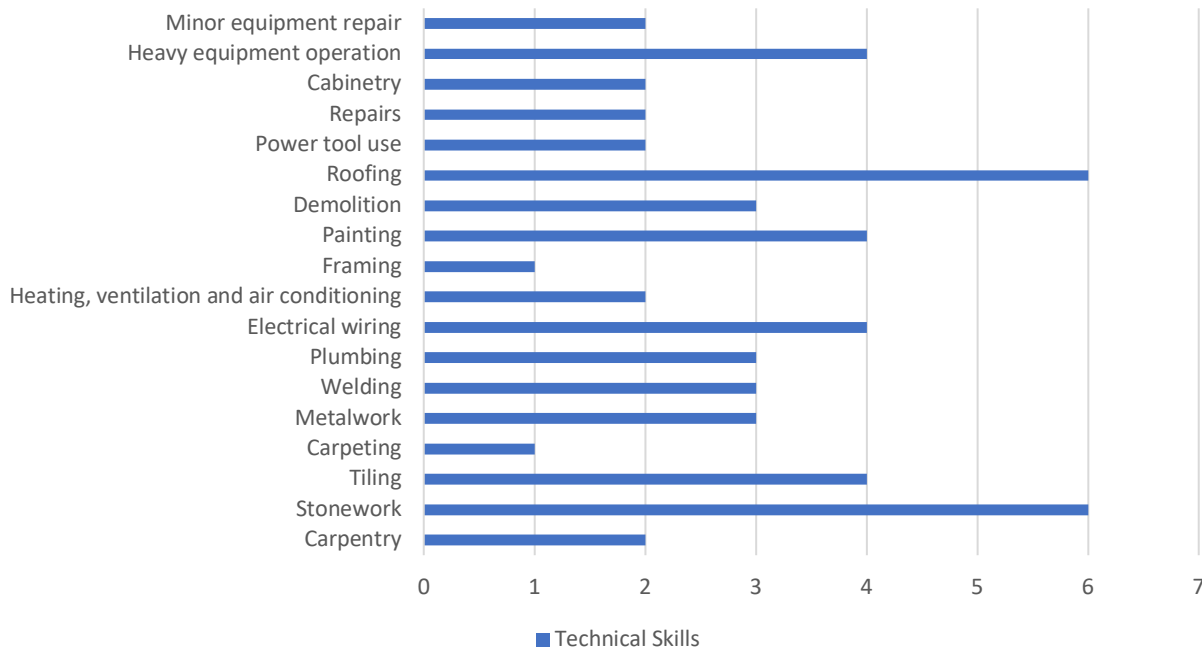
educational background, 90% of the respondents were holders of higher education qualifications, with 40% being master's degree holders or equivalent, 30% having an undergraduate degree or equivalent, and 20% had completed education at a tertiary level. The majority of them (60%) were between 25-39 years old, while the rest was from 40 to 60 years old.

- More than half of the respondents (60%) mentioned that they have experience in working with people from other countries, and they have a clear understanding of their needs, struggles, and opportunities in relation with the construction sector.
- According to participants' responses the most in-demand specialty in the Greek construction sector is that of the construction worker. The specialty of the electrician has been reported as the second most needed specialty in the Greek construction sector, while those of machine operator, flooring installer, and plumber followed respectively in the third place. On the contrary, according to respondents' opinion, the specialties of brick mason, carpenter, glazier, painter, and tile setter were reported as the least needed specialties. The graph below illustrates the results in detail.

Construction specialties that are needed mostly in Greece



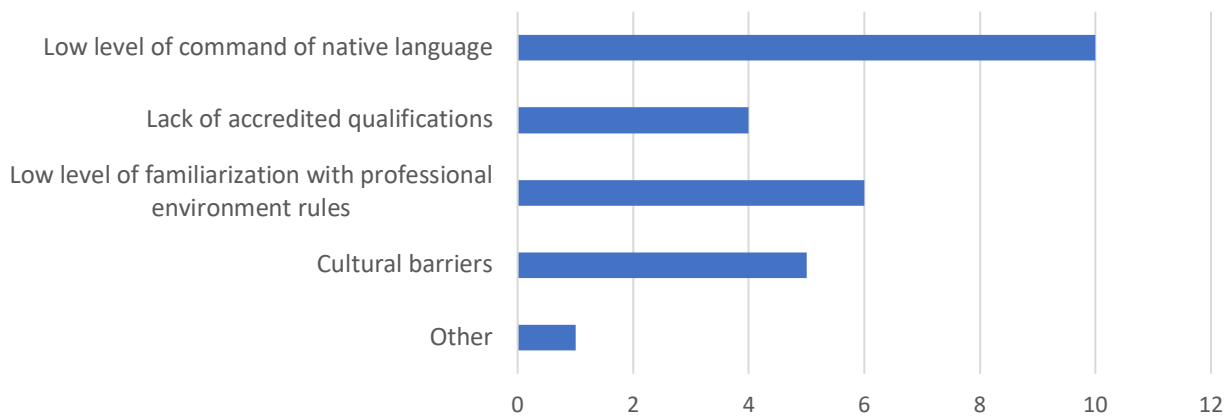
- In reference to the level of technical skills these specialties require, more than half of the of the respondents (90%) claimed that an average or very good knowledge is a prerequisite for adequately implementing the daily tasks and responsibilities.
- Six out ten respondents considered the skills of stonework and roofing as the top skills needed for performing the above-mentioned professional roles. The facts suggest a strong alignment of the skills with the specialty of the construction worker. Furthermore, the skills of heavy equipment operation, painting, electrical wiring, and tiling come in the second place according to the respondents' viewpoint. Again, it can be observed that there is a significant correlation between the responses related with specialties. Skills related with, demolition, plumbing, welding, and metalwork were the third of the most necessary technical skills reported while framing and carpeting were considered the less essential skills needed. The graph below illustrates the collected data in detail.



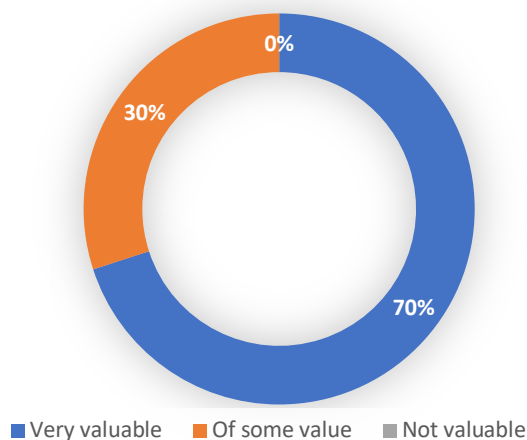
- The respondents classified the importance of soft skills for individuals working or wishing to work in the Construction sector, by setting Teamwork as the top soft skill required by the construction employers and the construction working environment. The vast majority of respondents (90 %) reported its essence. Secondly, Communication and Problem-solving skills have been deemed equally necessary skills for a construction worker since they collected the 80% of the responses. Thirdly, Stress Management and Time Management came in the third place, as they concentrated the 60% and 50% of the responses respectively. Conflict Management, Resourcefulness, and Adaptability have been selected from four out of ten participants (40%) while less importance was given to Critical thinking and Creativity (30% of the responses). Lastly, Organizational Skills have been considered as the less important soft skills with only 20% of selections. It can be observed that teamwork is the skill gathering the highest percentage. This is evidence that occupational construction profiles prerequisite collaborative work. The following two most critical soft skills are communication and problem-solving, which are highly aligned with teamwork and the efficient function of the construction team. The skills that follow in the list are stress management and time management, which prove the essence of dealing with demanding situations in a limited time. Differences in percentages of the other skills have slight differences, leading to the conclusion that they play an essential role in the construction sector.
- Seven out of ten of the participants reported skills shortages in the construction workers and brick masons, 60% in the electricians, and 50% in the carpenters. The rest of the occupational profiles have received fewer responses since the plumbers, and machine operators were mentioned by three respondents, respectively (30%) and the flooring installer by 2 participants (20%). The three profiles being part of the bottom list are the tile setter, painter, and glazier, who have been reported just by one participant. The results verify that the most demanding occupational profile in the labor market, the construction worker, is also the profile with the highest skills shortages.



- Participants indicated that most of migrant workers tend to be employed in the roles of construction workers/laborers while the second most common occupation is that of plumbers or carpenters. Migrants involvement in the positions of tile layers, painters, forklift operators is considered to be less frequent.
- As it can be observed in the graph below, all professionals agreed that the poor command of the Greek language is considered as the most important barrier for TCNs/migrants, working in the Construction sector, (affecting their performance or employability) while 60% of them identified the lack of acquaintance with professional environment rules, as the second most important barrier for TCNs/migrants for working in constructions. Half of those surveyed (50%) claimed that cultural barriers may also put obstacle for TCNs working in the construction sector while the lack that lack of accredited qualifications concentrated the 40% of the responses.



- Concerning the necessity of vocational education and training in the construction sector, all respondents claimed that Vocational Education and Training is essential for construction workers in general, with the majority of respondents (70%) reporting it as “highly valuable” and the rest (30%) as “of some value” .



How valuable is the vocational training for individuals wishing to work in the Construction Sector



- Respondents have reported that specialized training is mainly associated with the construction occupations requiring specific safety measures to ensure workers' safety. VET education was considered as an essential part of developing construction workers' soft skills since they can learn how to communicate effectively, work in teams and solve problems. Nonetheless, respondents mentioned that for specific occupations requiring specific expertise (insulators, metal processors, electricians, painters, construction workers, dry building craftsmen). VET education is highly important and could benefit workers in terms of efficiency and productivity.
- With respect to the linguistic capacity in Greek language, of TCNs working in the construction sector, 80% of the respondents classified as "very valuable" while only a 20% considered it "of some value"

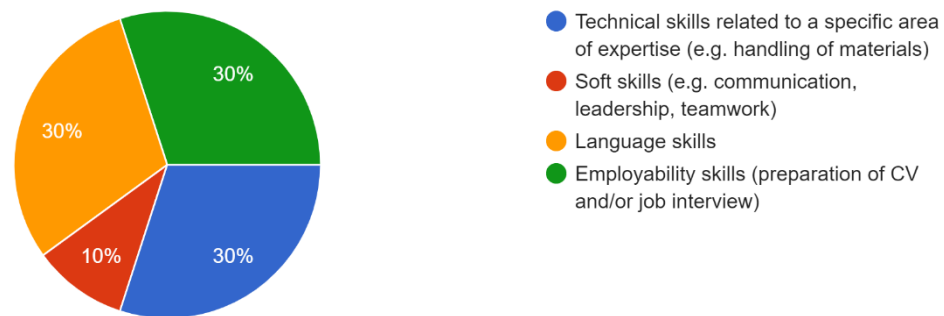
3.2 Results from the online questionnaire for TCNs

Data was collected from ten (10) TCNs working or wishing to work in the construction sector, using an online questionnaire. A total of (23) questions (See Annex II) were asked and the results are summarized and presented as follows:

- All participants were males and were equally distributed in terms of age. Four out of ten participants belonged to the age group (25 – 39) while another 40% were in the 40 – 60 age group. Most of participants have been living in Greece for more than 3 years while 60% of them reported living in Greece for more than 5 years. With regards to their years of professional experience in Greece, participants' responses were equally distributed as 30% of them reported having experience from 1 to 5 years, while three out ten respondents reported having experience reported having experience from 5 to 10 years and more than 10 years respectively. Therefore, more than half of the TCNs participating in the research reported a working experience of more than 5 years. In terms of their nationality breakdown, most participants were from Albania (40%) and Georgia (30%) and the rest of originate from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Iran. The vast majority of participants (90%) reported working or wishing to be employed in the sector related with the construction/maintenance/renovation of buildings or apartments.
- More than half of the participants (60%), indicated having professional experience in the construction sector, related at a large extent mainly with the roles of construction worker/laborer or electrician.
- Respondents had differing views regarding the most significant obstacle for their recruitment in the construction sector by providing diverse responses. Concretely, thirty per cent of those surveyed believed that the lack of appropriate working experience is the main barrier for entering in the construction sector while another 30% considered the lack of adequate professional expertise as the main obstacle. Non recognition of prior learning qualifications and/or professional skills has been identified as a barrier by the 20% of respondents. Not having the physical endurance to perform the tasks required was indicated by one individual and the same applies for the language barriers.



- In reference to the type of soft skills that respondents possess and feel capable of exercise, all TCNs indicated teamwork as the skill they are mostly adept. Secondly, creativity and communication skills were highlighted by the 60% of respondents while the skills of problem solving, critical thinking and decision making were indicated by the 50% of the respondents. Less than half of the respondents (40%) considered themselves capable in skills related with organization, adaptability, and stress management.
- The responses in reference to the skills that respondents would like to be further trained vary and thus not a clear tendency could be identified. More specifically, language, technical and employability skills concentrated 90 % of the responses and were equally distributed by gathering equal figures of preference (30 % for each skill category). Only one individual reported that further training in soft skills would be beneficial for him.



Pie chart 1: What skills you would like to develop /be trained on?

- Further learning of professional terminology came in the first place (50% of responses) of respondents' preferences regarding the type of training they would consider more important to receive. Training in manual skills came in the second place in their preferences (40%), while ICT skills training and learning of Greek language gathered the 30% of responses.
- Five out of ten respondents considered the position of construction worker/builder as the best match for their professional profile while four out of ten selected the position of electrician and only one selected the position of civil engineer. Additionally, just above half of the respondents would like to be further trained with regards to the position selected.
- Interesting data can be extracted regarding the respondents' self-assessment questions of their level of technical skills as it can be observed in the graph below. As it can be seen, technical skills over building and engineering are not considered to be of relatively good level as half of them reported having an average knowledge. Additionally, knowledge over Technology and automatized systems is considered to be quite low, as six out of ten respondents qualified their knowledge as average or lower. Similarly, the same also applies regarding, respondents' mechanical knowledge as 50% of them qualified their skills as average or below average. In contrast, the ability of handling and operating tools and machinery was the only field in which



those surveyed provided responses related with a high level of knowledge, as nine out of ten reported very good or excellent knowledge.

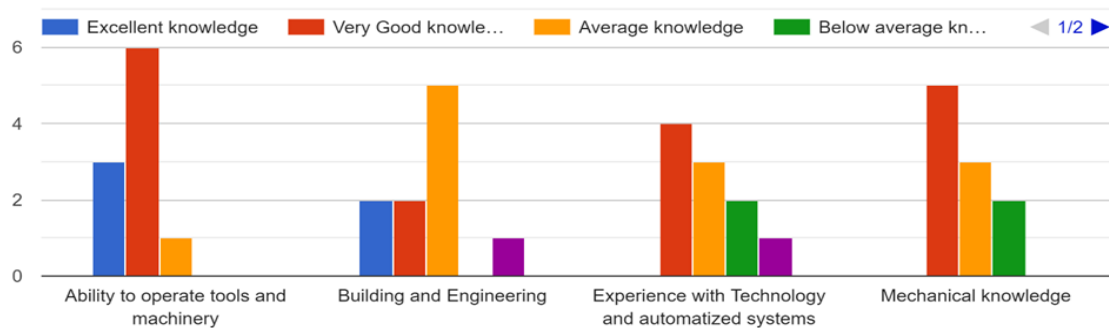


Figure 1. How would you assess your technical skills?

- Respondents were asked to indicate their level of concurrence in four different statements regarding the circumstances they favor their entrance in the construction labor market. Six out of ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the first statement (*My command of language is very good, but I feel I would need more training to develop my technical skills*). The latter indicates that respondents considered the development of technical skills as essential aspect, potentially through vocational training in order to be more adept performing their occupational roles and therefore gain more working opportunities in the construction labor market. With regards to the second statement (*I have the technical skills, but I lack interpersonal skills that impede me from finding a job in the construction sector*), no clear answers were provided, however 4 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The results illustrate that there a slight tendency of agreement with the statement. Therefore, the interpretation of the responses may be twofold. The respondents do feel certain on their level of interpersonal skills and potentially their soft skills, in a way that could serve them as valuable resource to find a job in the construction sector. Secondly, respondents might not feel sure about their employability skills. In response to the third statement (*I have the resources to work in the construction sector, but I do not command the language at an adequate level*) five out of ten respondents considered that their command of Greek language is of a level that do not impede them from working in the sector. However, half of respondents did not provide clear responses or agreed with the statement. Regarding the last statement, (*I am not aware of the professional environment and the behavioral rules of the specific sector*), the volume and the number of responses illustrate that respondents are acquainted with the rules and norms of the professional environment.

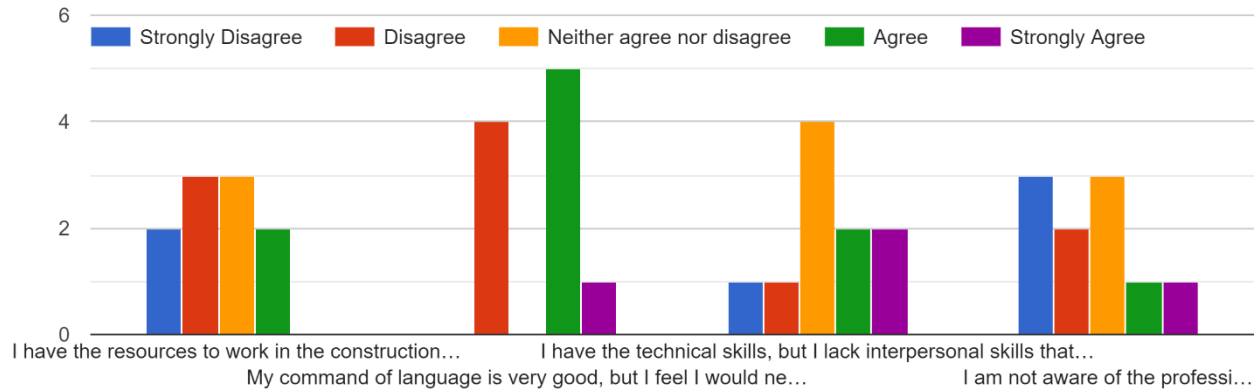


Figure 2: To what level do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Construction sector (in your region)?

- Three different occupational fields gathered the total number of responses regarding participants interests. The position of construction worker and electrician gathered an equal number of responses (40%), while 2 out of 10 respondents selected the position of painter.

3.3 Results from the focus groups/interviews with professionals

- The focus group discussions/interviews were attended by 3 individuals in total with a background in the construction sector. Two out of three participants were civil engineers while one of them was the owner of a construction company with expertise in metal processing. It is notable that a common characteristic of all participants was the fact that all had worked TCNs of different occupational backgrounds.
- All three participants mentioned that currently due to the increase of development of the construction sector and specifically due the rising of the building industry, there are significant working opportunities for a range of occupations. More concretely, the specialties reported concerned **forklift operators, electricians** and **refrigeration engineers**. Additionally, the current and forthcoming environmental regulations and standards imposed at national and EU level leading to more environmentally friendly and sustainable building and better control of energy expenditure lead also to working opportunities in specialties as the ones of **insulation** and **waterproof professionals** and **construction workers** using **dry construction materials** which are currently gaining ground. Electricians and refrigeration engineers require more specialized knowledge since the daily tasks of these specialties cannot be easily implemented without accredited vocational education and training.
- Participants unanimously agreed that good command of Greek language is an important asset for TCNs wishing to work in the construction sector as it facilitates communication and cooperation with their coworkers and supervisors. Furthermore, all participants highlighted the importance of the possession of soft skills. They all agreed that technical and more sophisticated skills are needed but depending on the specialty and tasks that each worker must perform. However, even if there are specialties requiring



more specialized knowledge than others, the professionals emphasized on the essence of soft skills as characteristics that will assist workers to be functional within the working environment, learn and develop professionally. Participants highlighted the following soft skills:

- Adaptability
 - Effective Communication
 - Hardworking
 - Growth mindset
 - Active Listening
 - Teamwork
 - Respect
- All participants mentioned that there is a specific but not official employment procedure for recruiting new workers. According to them, it has been a common practice, for both Greek natives and TCNs working in the sector, to learn the basic necessary skills and gain the knowledge needed to implement their daily tasks after being recruited and started working, in a kind of an “on the job training” and experiential learning. As they pointed out by sharing an example of such practice, the master craftsman tends to employ new unskilled workers as assistants and train them in the workplace, transferring knowledge by using a step-by-step process.
- According to the participants, currently there are Vocational Education and Training programs providing specialized knowledge to people willing to work the construction sector. However, as they mentioned, TCNs are not often aware of the training opportunities and/or might not be able to afford the costs of such trainings.
- **With regards to training gaps**, according to participants’ responses, besides the fact that the construction sector is linked to experiential learning sector there is still a demand for accredited construction workers in specific specialties. The main gaps identified are related to the new technology and automatized systems. The main training gaps are summarized as follows:
- Lack of accredited knowledge by many construction workers in specific construction occupational profiles
 - Lack of knowledge regarding health and safety measures and standard operating procedures especially while using of hazardous construction materials
 - Lack of knowledge regarding necessary reforms and adaptations due to green building standards and environmental criteria
 - Lack of upskilling programs for the state-of-the-art technological breakthroughs of each occupation.
- The interviewees highlighted four main factors that could favor the entrance and the rise of working opportunities for TCNs working in the construction sector. The majority of them were related with specific governmental policies:
- 1) Adoption and promotion of specific policies targeting the recruitment of TCNs in construction sector.
 - 2) Reduction of bureaucracy
 - 3) Design and Development of specific employment programs for construction workers by the National Manpower Organization Agency in Greece, OAED.



- 4) Identification of the construction working environment's standards and conditions and work of ethics.
- The participants reported that the employment opportunities are spread by the word of mouth and rarely through official announcement. In particular, the construction workers disseminate the construction job demands to other people of their family and social circle searching for a job.
 - The participants shared their views regarding the characteristics that could make TCNs more competitive in the construction sector labor market. Personality traits and mindset were reported as the most essential elements. The professionals reported the essence of employing people willing to learn new skills, gain new knowledge and having the ability to work hard under pressure. Secondly, physical endurance can play a critical role as is deemed a prerequisite for the majority of occupations in the sector.
 - Participants mentioned that there are many success stories of people working in the construction sector in terms of career development. They set examples from people originating from West Balkans and Albania that had started working in the construction field as non-accredited workers but received thorough guidelines and training and advanced professionally in the sector. In their view, successful incorporation, and advancement of TCNs in the construction sector is linked to their hardworking mentality and learning capacity. In this way, as they put it, they gain social acceptance while their encounters with Greek national construction workers became more frequent and meaningful. Last but not least, the participants emphasized on TCNs ability to demonstrate a high level of work ethic and create an environment of mutual understanding and collaboration.
 - For reasons related to proper and efficient communication, all participants identified poor command of Greek language as the main challenge for TCNs incorporation in the construction sector labor market. They all stressed the importance of the possession of soft skills instead of sophisticated technical skills as they can acquire technical skills through on-the-job training. The possession of soft skills (language skills, communication skills, discipline, adaptability) were considered as vital, as these traits will assist them adapt, learn fast and advance. Some respondents mentioned that proper acquaintance of the professional environment (legal rights and responsibilities) is considered an asset as it has been observed, there have been cases of TCNs victimization by their employers. The participants also emphasized that TCNs do not search for employment opportunities in the sector as they are unaware of the gaps and the opportunities for career development. In their words, *“despite being a sector very demanding in terms of physical strength and conditions, the construction sector can offer a satisfying salary, at least to cover the basics”*.

3.4 Results from the focus groups/interviews with TCNs

The discussion was attended by four TCNs, two males and two females, from two different countries (Albania & Afghanistan). All the participants were third country nationals who had migrated in Greece approximately 3 to 5 years ago. Two of them have arrived in Greece with their families while all of them had previous experience in the construction sector. The two male



participants originated from Albania work occasionally as construction laborers while the female participants work as painters.

- Participants shared mainly non positive experiences from their work in the Construction sector. They all mentioned that they did not have prior experience in the construction sector in their countries of origin.
- Participants expressed similar views regarding the role of linguistic capacity in the Greek context for both their adaptation in the country and search of employment. Good command of language was considered as the most important qualification a migrant worker should possess to have better opportunities in the Greek labor market. Poor or average knowledge of the Greek language plays a key role in every workplace, including the construction sector and therefore is the primary skill that every migrant should possess to advance. According to their experience, employers in Greece tend to hire third country nationals due to reasons related with low wages as generally migrant workers are considered as a source of “cheap labor”. Despite the wage gap between Greek natives and migrant workers, all participants shared the opinion that especially those who do not speak Greek at an adequate level experiencing language difficulties, they have far less opportunities in both finding a job in the construction sector or to advance professionally, potentially at a higher better paid role and improve their skills.
- All participants agreed that a general practice in the field of construction sector is for the less experienced workers to be assigned basic, rough, and more demanding tasks in terms of physical endurance e.g carrying heavy tools or materials, especially if migrants’ workers do not have prior experience or do not speak Greek adequately. Learning or improving their skills depends upon the master craftsman’ willingness.
- As it appears from the discussion that took place, speaking Greek is considered the most essential element for third country nationals’ integration in Greek society and inclusion in official employment structures. In this vein, all participants expressed their deep concerns regarding the working conditions in the construction sector which is characterized for its physical endurance demands and precariousness. All participants reported being familiarized with the working environment in Greece, its rules as also their rights and obligations. By sharing some examples, of their experience in relation to the construction sector, they all concluded that the requirement of health insurance coverage is an additional significant challenge, as it is not taken for granted from all employers in the sector. As some participants indicated, there are examples of employers trying to take advantage of migrants' status whenever they can, usually when there is miscommunication due to the language barrier. As a consequence, they might not pay their insurance fees, or they try to delay their payment as much as possible. Therefore, migrant workers may experience uncertainty as access to public welfare and healthcare services might be problematic. Some participants set as examples the cases of undocumented migrants who are more likely to find a job in this sector as employers do not have to cover insurance fees as a result of their “black” and “undeclared” type of labor. For this reason, all participants emphasized on the need of having access to legal support schemes in order to have access to proper and official information, feel safer and be less subject to exploitation.



- All participants agreed that the factor of professional experience or expertise is crucial, as the more experience a migrant worker has, more opportunities for professional advancement or better salaries may arise compared to those workers without experience.
- The observation here is that TCNs face a number of significant challenges for entering in the construction sector labor market, mainly attributed to a low level of command of Greek language which limits their professional development opportunities and might frame their knowledge regarding the working environment. Our participants shared similar views and stories regarding the necessity of Greek language lessons, or the provision of a professional vocabulary specialized for the construction sector or other tools that will assist them in gaining more experience in terms of technical skills and will improve their employability skills. These developments, in their viewpoints, will contribute positively to the creation of more and better opportunities in locating a job position in the construction sector and improving their integration prospects.

4. Final Recommendations: Needs analysis

4.1 Skills and gaps identified by professionals

The skillsets and training needs highlighted by construction sector professionals participating in online surveys and focus group are mainly related to the following topics.

- Good command of Greek language is considered an essential qualification for TCNs working or wishing to work in the construction sector, for reasons related with their proper and efficient collaboration within the workplace (employers, supervisors and colleagues).
- Soft skills play a crucial role for TCNs effective incorporation in employment schemes in the construction sector. The profile of TCNs, their willingness to learn and work under guidance, positive personality traits are highly evaluated on behalf of employers in the construction sector. In many cases, soft skills such as teamwork, communication skills, time management, adaptability and active listening are considered more important than the possession of technical skills, especially since in construction workplaces a form of experiential learning is often implemented, mainly for the positions of construction workers/laborers. As nine out of ten professionals reported in the online survey, an average or good knowledge of technical skills is considered as a prerequisite for adequately implementing the daily tasks and responsibilities.
- The specialties which are mostly needed in the construction sector are those of the **construction worker and electrician**. The first position, however, does not require any sophisticated expertise compared to that of the electrician. Professionals identified stonework and roofing as the most necessary skills to perform the tasks of the construction worker.
- Professionals classified the most critical barriers for TCNs working in the construction sector. Irrespective of the good knowledge of Greek language, the rest of barriers was classified as follows:
 - Limited acquaintance with professional environment rules (60 %)
 - Cultural barriers (50%)



- Lack of any type of accredited qualifications (40%)
- Professionals identified 4 main areas in which further training would be essential. The main training gaps identified were related with:
 - Acquaintance on new technology and automatized systems.
 - Need for accreditation of professional knowledge related with specific occupational positions.
 - Knowledge in health and safety measures applied to the field of construction sector
 - knowledge regarding modern and updated environmental standards
 - Needs of further upskilling and capacity building training programs designed and promoted by national manpower authorities and related with the state-of-the-art technological breakthroughs of each occupation.
 - VET education opportunities were considered of significant importance as it was reported by the 70% of online survey respondents.

4.2 Occupational profile and gaps identified by TCNs

The main findings regarding the needs of TCNs in terms of skills and competences as it came out through online survey and focus group discussion are the following:

- Improvement of Greek language skills, development of technical and employability skills were the competences highlighted by TCNs participating in the online survey.
- Good command of Greek language holds a special place in TCN's preferences regarding training needs while its significance was reiterated when TCNs identified as one of the most important challenges during focus group discussion. Participants in focus groups discussions considered speaking and understanding Greek language in adequate level, as one the most essential qualification that will assist them not only entering in the construction sector but to evolve professionally by undertaking different roles and responsibilities and potentially higher wages. In this vein, further training in aspects related to the professional terminology needed in the construction sector was highlighted by 50 % of respondents during the online survey.
- Capacity building courses regarding technical or manual I skills has been also identified as a need by 40% of TCNs. It is essential to note that, knowledge in building and engineering, automatized systems and mechanics was assessed by the majority of TCNs as average or below average. It must be noted though, that during the online survey, TCNs provided contradictory or unclear responses in questions related with their level of technical knowledge. There were cases where TCNs considered themselves capable of performing technical tasks, however, they were willing to receive more training as 50% of survey participants indicated that they would like to be further trained in this position. On the contrary, focus group discussions provided a quite clearer picture as participants illustrated that the more professional experience or expertise, they have the better for them in terms of opportunities.
- Employability skills have also been indicated by TCNs as an area they could receive more training. Even though recruitment in the construction sector usually takes place mainly through social networks, a significant number of survey participants consider that they lack interpersonal skills to be recruited for a job in the construction sector.



- It is noteworthy that TCNs participating in the online survey and focus group discussion do not identify the development of soft skills as an area they would need further training.
- The position of construction worker/builder has been identified by TCNs participating in the online survey as the best match for their professional profile according to the 50% respondents. Secondly, the position of electrician came at the second place of TCNs' preferences.
- Survey participants emphasized on the lack of adequate professional expertise and experience as main obstacles for finding a suitable job position in the construction sector. Attention was also given, at later extent though, to the non-recognition of prior learning qualifications or professionals skills.
- However, further training opportunities of their manual or technical skills were also highlighted while educational opportunities in computer skills followed. In Further learning of professional terminology came in the first place (50% of responses) of respondents' preferences regarding the type of training they would consider more important to receive. Training in manual skills came in the second place in their preferences (40%), while ICT skills training and learning of Greek language gathered the 30% of responses. More specifically, language, technical and employability skills concentrated 90 % of the responses and were equally distributed by gathering equal figures of preference (30 % for each skill category)
- Three different occupational fields gathered the total number of responses regarding participants interests. The position of construction worker and electrician gathered an equal number of responses (40%),

4.3 Concluding Remarks

Insightful recommendations can be extracted by drawing a comparison between the information gathered from TCNs and professionals regarding the occupations, the skills needed, the obstacles and challenges in construction sector. Therefore, the design of a capacity building programme targeting TCNs working or wishing to work in the sector should take into consideration the following points.

1. Functionality in using the Greek language is considered an essential skill, both for TCNs' recruitment in construction sector jobs and for their professional development. Research findings corroborate desk research and previous studies conducted. Language skills, however, were interpreted in different ways by professionals and TCNs. Professionals consider good command of Greek in a sense of a soft skill, that will help TCNs communicate effectively in the working environment while TCNs felt that speaking and understanding Greek will provide them more and better job opportunities. The development of glossary of professional terminology and its use as tool by TCNs has been addressed by TCNs.
2. Soft skills are considered of significant importance, as professionals reported during field research corroborating the desk research on the skills' demand in the construction sector. The main soft skills identified concerned:
 - Teamwork
 - Communication skills
 - Problem-solving skills



- Stress Management
 - Time Management
 - Effective Communication
 - Hard work mentality
 - Growth mindset
 - Active Listening
 - Adaptability
 - Respect
 - Conflict Management
 - Resourcefulness
3. Employability skills have also been assessed by TCNs as a thematic area for requiring further training.
 4. There is need for more and more visible vocational training programmes in fields related with manual and technical skills of TCNs as the lack of professional expertise and accreditations poses a significant obstacle and was addressed by both professionals and TCNs.
 5. Additionally, professionals emphasized on the need of TCNs to be better familiarized with construction sector's working environment especially in terms of health and safety requirements and practices. Access to official sources that could assist TCNs in terms of their labor rights and labor relations has been reported by TCNs in focus group discussion.
 6. According to both target groups' views, the specialties in which TCNs could be mostly employed in constructions are those of construction worker/laborer/brick mason or other occupations related with the building, maintenance, and renovation such as that of electrician which requires more expertise.
 7. In the above-mentioned specialties, the highest rates of skills shortages were identified. The top skills indicated for the above-mentioned specialties according to professionals in order of priority:
 - Stonework and roofing
 - Heavy equipment operation
 - Painting,
 - Electrical wiring
 - Tiling
 - Demolition,
 - Plumbing
 - Welding
 - Metalwork



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Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire for TCNs data

Dear respondent,

We kindly invite you to participate in the research conducted as part of the MITRUST project, which is co-funded by the European Commission under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify the vocational and educational needs of TCNs who wish to be employed in the Construction sector.

Please mind that the survey is anonymous and all collected information will be used only for the research purposes of the MITRUST project.

We thank you in advance for your participation!

1. I am (please select one)



- a. Third country national
- b. Other (please specify)

2. What is your level of education?

- c. Less than primary
- d. Primary education
- e. Secondary education
- f. Tertiary education
- g. Bachelor's or equivalent
- h. Master's or equivalent
- i. Doctoral or equivalent
- j. Adult Education/Continuing Education
- k. Other

3. Are you currently employed?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, please also answer to the following questions:

A. What is your job title?

Answer: _____

B. How long have you been working?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. From 1 year to 5 years
- c. From 5 years to 10 years
- d. Over 10 years

4. I have been living in this country

- a. Less than a year
- b. From 1 to 3 years
- c. From 3 to 5 years
- d. More than 5 years

5. What is your age group?

- a. 18 to 24
- b. 25 to 39
- c. 40 to 60
- d. 60 plus

6. What is your gender?



Prefer not to answer

7. What is your nationality?

Answer: _____

8. In which sector are you employed/wish to be employed?

- a. Building construction
- b. Infrastructure construction
- c. Industrial construction

9. Do you have a professional background in the Construction Sector?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. If you have selected YES, please indicate the type of work you performed:

- a. Construction worker/laborer/material handler
- b. Builder
- c. Tile setter
- d. Plumber
- e. Painter
- f. Electrician
- g. Other: Please describe: _____

11. Which of the following skills you consider yourself as capable? Select all options that apply.

- a. Communication
- d. Teamwork
- e. Problem-solving
- f. Time management
- g. Critical thinking



- h. Decision-making
- i. Organizational
- j. Stress management
- k. Adaptability
- l. Conflict management
- m. Leadership
- n. Creativity
- o. Resourcefulness

12. Which of the following, you consider as the most significant obstacle to be recruited in the construction sector?

- a. Lack of adequate professional expertise
- b. Insufficient working experience
- c. Recognition of prior learning qualifications and/or professional skills
- d. Language barriers
- e. Low level of communication skills
- f. Other: Please describe: _____

13. What skills you would like to develop/be trained on?

- a. Technical skills related to a specific area of expertise (e.g. handling of materials)
- b. Soft skills (e.g. communication, leadership, teamwork)
- c. Language skills
- d. Employability skills (preparation of CV and/or job interview)

14. What kind of training you consider more important to engage in? Please select all options that apply.

- a. Training in Manual Skills: metal, wood, tapestry, painting, electricity
- b. Computer training
- c. Learning of native language
- d. Learning of an additional language (English)
- e. Learning of professional terminology



15. What is the construction position you feel that would be a best match for you?

- a. Building worker/laborer
- b. Tile setter
- c. Plumber
- d. Painter
- e. Electrician
- f. Flooring installer
- g. Brick mason
- h. Carpenter
- i. Civil engineer
- j. Brick mason
- k. Other: Please describe: _____

16. How would you assess your technical skills?

Ability to operate tools and machinery

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

Building and Engineering

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

Experience with Technology and automatized systems

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge



Mechanical knowledge

- a. Excellent knowledge
- b. Very Good knowledge
- c. Average knowledge
- d. Below average knowledge
- e. Poor knowledge

17. Would you wish to be further trained in this construction sector position?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. What is your command of native language:

- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Average
- d. Below average
- e. Poor

19. What is your command of English language:

- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Average
- d. Below average
- e. Poor

20. To what level do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Construction sector (in your region): (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

- a. I have the resources to work in the construction sector, but I do not command the language at an adequate level
- b. My command of language is very good, but I feel I would need more training to develop my technical skills
- c. I have the technical skills, but I lack interpersonal skills that impede me from finding a job in the construction sector
- d. I am not aware of the professional environment and the behavioral rules of the specific sector



21. How do you get information about potential job opportunities? Please select all options that apply.

- a. Internet
- b. Friend
- c. Newspaper
- d. Tv
- e. Radio
- f. Other

22. Which of the following technical sectors would you be interested in? Please select all options that apply below or add your own.

- a. Construction Worker
- b. Carpenter
- c. Plumber
- d. Flooring installer
- e. Tile setter
- f. Painter
- g. Glazier
- h. Machine Operator
- i. Electrician
- j. Brick Mason
- k. Other (please specify) : _____

23. Do you have any further comments?

Annex 2: Questionnaire for Professionals data

Dear respondent,



We kindly invite you to participate in the research conducted as part of the MITRUST project, which is co-funded by the European Commission under the framework of Erasmus+ Programme.

The main objective of this questionnaire is to identify the vocational and educational needs of TCNs who wish to be employed in the Construction sector.

Please mind that the survey is anonymous and all collected information will be used only for the research purposes of the MITRUST project.

We thank you in advance for your participation!

1. I am (please select one)
 - a. VET Tutor/Trainer
 - b. Professional working in the Construction Sector
 - c. Recruiter for the Construction Sector
 - d. Other (please specify): _____

2. . What is your level of education?
 - a. Secondary education
 - b. Tertiary education
 - c. Bachelor's or equivalent
 - d. Master's or equivalent
 - e. Doctoral or equivalent
 - f. Adult Education/Continuing Education
 - g. Other

3. What is your job title?

Answer: _____

4. What is your age group?
 - a. 18 to 24
 - b. 25 to 39
 - c. 40 to 60
 - d. 60 plus

5. . What is your gender?

Answer _____

Prefer not to answer

6. Have you ever worked with TCNs?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. For which of the indicatively below mentioned specialties of the Construction sector is there a demand at the moment?
 - a. Construction Worker
 - b. Carpenter
 - c. Plumber



- d. Flooring installer
 - e. Tile setter
 - f. Painter
 - g. Glazier
 - h. Machine Operator
 - i. Electrician
 - j. Brick Mason
 - k. Unaware
 - l. Other (please specify) : _____
8. What level of technical skills these specialties require?
- a. Excellent knowledge of technical skills
 - b. Very good knowledge of technical skills
 - c. Average knowledge of technical skills
 - d. Below knowledge of technical skills
 - e. Poor knowledge of technical skills
 - f. Other:(please specify)_____
9. Which technical skills are most required for the above-mentioned specialties?
- a. Carpentry
 - b. Stonework
 - c. Tiling
 - d. Carpeting
 - e. Metalwork
 - f. Welding
 - g. Plumbing
 - h. Electrical wiring
 - i. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
 - j. Framing
 - k. Painting
 - l. Demolition
 - m. Roofing
 - n. Power tool use
 - o. Repairs
 - p. Cabinetry
 - q. Heavy equipment operation
 - r. Minor equipment repair
 - s. Other (please specify) :
10. How valuable is the vocational training for individuals wishing to work in the Construction Sector?



- a. Very valuable
- b. Of some value
- c. Not valuable

11. Which of the following soft skills do you consider more important for an individual working/wishing to work in the Construction sector? Select all options that apply.

- a. Communication
- b. Teamwork
- c. Problem-solving
- d. Time management
- e. Critical thinking
- f. Decision-making
- g. Organizational
- h. Stress management
- i. Adaptability
- j. Conflict management
- k. Leadership
- l. Creativity
- m. Resourcefulness

12. According to your knowledge, which are currently the skills' shortages in the Construction Sector?

- a. Construction Worker
- b. Carpenter
- c. Plumber
- d. Flooring installer
- e. Tile setter
- f. Painter
- g. Glazier
- h. Machine Operator
- i. Electrician
- j. Brick Mason
- k. Other: _____

13. Please indicate the specialties within the construction sector where migrant construction workers are mostly needed? Please fill three specialties allocated based on priority.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

14. Which of the following do you consider as the main obstacles for TCNs working in the Construction sector?

- a. Low level of command of native language



- b. Lack of accredited qualifications
- c. Low level of familiarization with professional environment rules
- d. Cultural barriers
- e. Other (please specify)

15. For which type of skills do you consider that further vocational training would be valuable for TCNs working or wishing to work in the Construction Sector? Please fill three skills below, allocating them on by priority.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

16. How valuable do you consider the linguistic capacity for TCNs (migrant workers) in working in the Construction Sector?

- a. Very valuable
- b. Of some value
- c. Not valuable

17. Do you have any further comments?

Annex 3: Data from focus groups/interviews with TCNs


ANNEX 6: FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Project No: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000035643

PART 1: SUMMARY AND PROFILING

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Name of Focus group / interview: | |
| Focus group / interviews - General Information | Participants Information |
| Date: 10/06/2022 | No of participants Scheduled: 9 |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Start Time: 12:00 Location: Greek Forum of Migrants Elapsed Time: 12:40 | | No of participants Attended: 4 Participants Type: TCNs No of Male: 2 No of Female: 2 |
| Name of Moderator: | Alvaro Vaitsis | |
| Contact Details: | vaitsis.a@symplexis.eu | |
| Signature of Moderator: |  | |
| Name of Support Staff: | - | |
| Contact Details: | - | |
| Signature of Support Staff: | - | |

PART 2: KEY FINDINGS

The discussion was attended by four TCNs, two males and two females, from two different countries (Albania & Afghanistan). All the participants were third country nationals who had migrated in Greece approximately 3 to 5 years ago. Two of them have arrived in Greece with their families while all of them had previous experience in the construction sector. The two male participants originated from Albania work occasionally as construction laborers while the female participants work as painters.

- Participants shared mainly non positive experiences from their work in the Construction sector. They all mentioned that they did not have prior experience in the construction sector in their countries of origin.

- Participants expressed similar views regarding the role of linguistic capacity in the Greek context for both their adaptation in the country and search of employment. Good command of language was considered as the most important qualification a migrant worker should possess to have better opportunities in the Greek labor market. Poor or average knowledge of the Greek language plays a key role in every workplace, including the construction sector and therefore is the primary skill that every migrant should possess to advance. According to their experience, employers in Greece tend to hire third country nationals due to reasons related with low wages as generally migrant workers are considered as a source of “cheap labor”. Despite the wage gap



between Greek natives and migrant workers, all participants shared the opinion that especially those who do not speak Greek at an adequate level experiencing language difficulties, they have far less opportunities in both finding a job in the construction sector or to advance professionally, potentially at a higher better paid role and improve their skills.

- All participants agreed that a general practice in the field of construction sector is for the less experienced workers to be assigned basic, rough, and more demanding tasks in terms of physical endurance e.g carrying heavy tools or materials, especially if migrants' workers do not have prior experience or do not speak Greek adequately. Learning or improving their skills depends upon the master craftsman' willingness.

- As it appears from the discussion that took place, speaking Greek is considered the most essential element for third country nationals' integration in Greek society and inclusion in official employment structures. In this vein, all participants expressed their deep concerns regarding the working conditions in the construction sector which is characterized for its physical endurance demands and precariousness. All participants reported being familiarized with the working environment in Greece, its rules as also their rights and obligations. By sharing some examples, of their experience in relation to the construction sector, they all concluded that the requirement of health insurance coverage is an additional significant challenge, as it is not taken for granted from all employers in the sector. As some participants indicated, there are examples of employers trying to take advantage of migrants' status whenever they can, usually when there is miscommunication due to the language barrier. As a consequence, they might not pay their insurance fees, or they try to delay their payment as much as possible. Therefore, migrant workers may experience uncertainty as access to public welfare and healthcare services might be problematic. Some participants set as examples the cases of undocumented migrants who are more likely to find a job in this sector as employers do not have to cover insurance fees as a result of their "black" and "undeclared" type of labor. For this reason , all participants emphasized on the need of having access to legal support schemes in order to have access to proper and official information, feel safer and be less subject to exploitation.

- All participants agreed that the factor of professional experience or expertise is crucial, as the more experience a migrant worker has, more opportunities for professional advancement or better salaries may arise compared to those workers without experience.

PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Please provide your recommendations based on the discussion guide


The observation here is that TCNs face a number of significant challenges for entering in the construction sector labor market, mainly attributed to a low level of command of Greek language which limits their professional development opportunities and might frame their knowledge regarding the working environment. Our participants shared similar views and stories regarding the necessity of Greek language lessons, or the provision of a professional vocabulary specialized for the construction sector or other tools that will assist them in gaining more experience in terms of technical skills and will improve their



employability skills. These developments, in their viewpoints, will contribute positively to the creation of more and better opportunities in locating a job position in the construction sector and improving their integration prospects.

Annex 4: Data from focus groups/interviews with professionals

PART 1: SUMMARY AND PROFILING

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of Focus group / interview: | |
| Focus group / interviews - General Information Dates: 26/05/2022 Start Time: 17:00 Location: Online Zoom Meeting Elapsed Time: 17:40 | Participants Information No of participants Scheduled: 4 No of participants Attended: 3 Participants Type: <i>Professionals of the construction sector</i> No of Male: 3 No of Female: 0 |
| Name of Moderator: | Christina Triantafyllou |
| Contact Details: | triantafyllou@akmi-international.com |
| Signature of Moderator: |  |
| Name of Support Staff: | - |
| Contact Details: | - |
| Signature of Support Staff: | - |

PART 2: KEY FINDINGS

The discussion was attended by three professionals of the construction sector, who were males. Two of them are civil engineers and one of them owner of a construction company.



- Participants have worked with third country nationals of different occupational profiles.
- They reported the constant increase of development of the construction sector
- Participants shared mainly their experience about the occupational profiles that are needed in Greece, which are forklift operators, electricians and refrigeration engineers, and the most necessary soft skills that are adaptability, effective communication, hardworking, growth mindset, active listening, teamwork and respect.
- Participants unanimously agreed that good command of Greek language is an important asset for TCNs wishing to work in the construction sector
- All participants mentioned that there is a specific but not official employment procedure for recruiting new workers in the sector.
- Most of the current construction workers had “on the job training”
- The most essential training gaps are related to the lack of accredited knowledge and competencies regarding health and safety measures. They also lack knowledge concerning necessary reforms and adaptations due to green building standards and environmental criteria
- The interviewees highlighted four main factors that could favor the entrance and the rise of working opportunities for TCNs working in the construction sector:
 1. Adoption and promotion of specific policies targeting the recruitment of TCNs in construction sector.
 2. Reduction of bureaucracy
 3. Design and Development of specific employment programs for construction workers by the National Manpower Organization Agency in Greece, OAED.
 4. Identification of the construction working environment's standards and conditions and work of ethics.

PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Please provide your recommendations based on the discussion guide

The observation here is that professionals in the construction sector mentioned that TCNs have to deal with many challenges in entering the labor market. The current policies and the bureaucracy might be an obstacle to their employment. Our participants shared the importance of delivering soft skills training to TCNs since they play a crucial role in their employment and the construction working conditions. Last but not least, their training in the national language support TCNs' communication and cooperation with the local construction workers.