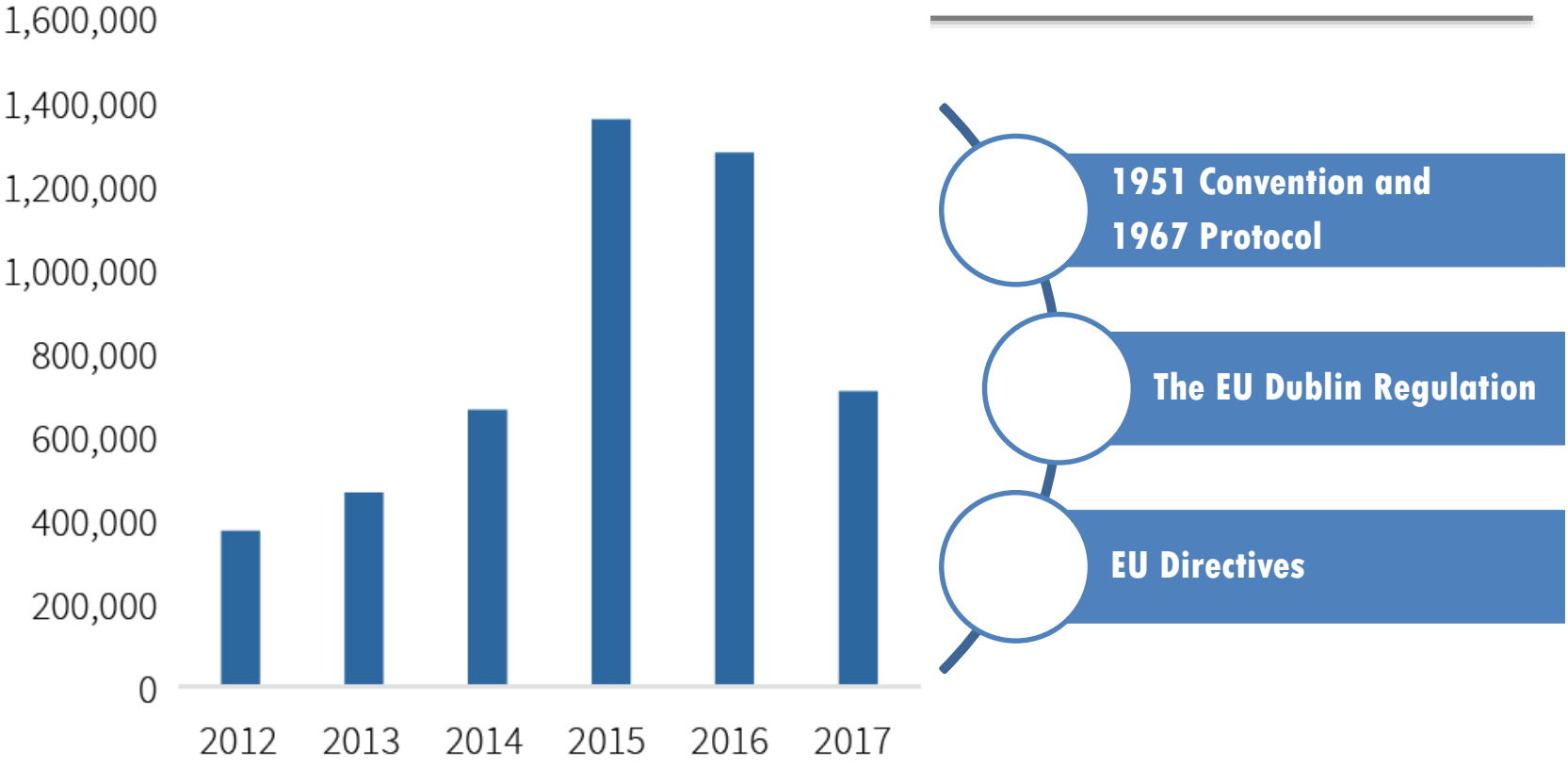
An illustration of a man and a woman walking on a sandy beach. The man is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants, and the woman is wearing a long blue dress. They are walking towards the right, leaving footprints in the sand. In the background, there are waves crashing onto the shore. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

Asylum Seekers in the European Union:

**Building Evidence to Inform
Policy Making**

A spike in the number of asylum seekers in the EU



EASO (2018)

Two questions motivated the study

- **Who are the asylum seekers and why are they choosing to come to the EU and what are their motivations?**
 - **Who decides to go vs. stay behind?**
 - **The migration experience**

- **What is the nature of the labor supply that these asylum seekers constitute?**
 - **Human capital**

Outcome of the study

- **Contribute to filling the **data and knowledge gaps****
 - **Scarcity of policy-relevant data and analysis**
 - **Complement global knowledge agenda on forced displacement**
- **Contribute through World Bank's **technical expertise on sampling, data collection and welfare analysis****
- **Sets an **agenda for future data and analytical work****

Scope

- **Survey designed to allow meaningful **benchmarking** of asylum seeker population, with comparisons between asylum seekers, with countries of origin, and with general world population.**
- **Sampling designed to be **representative** of the adult population staying at reception centers in Italy and Greece at the time of the survey**
- **The survey does *not* include (i) those who stayed in 3rd countries outside the E.U. or remained in country of origin; (ii) people in earlier (or later) waves of migration; (iii) people who did not stay in reception centers; and (iv) unaccompanied minors.**

Multiple-methods data

Target population: asylum seekers 18+ years hosted in centers/camps in Italy and Greece, from top nationalities of arrivals (*sample does NOT include unaccompanied minors*)

Timing of data collection: January – May 2017

I. Quantitative

→ Two-stage stratified sample

Italy

- 2,444 (2,139 males and 305 females)
- Nationalities: Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, Eritrea, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Somalia, Sudan (72% of total 2016 arrivals)

Greece

- 1,680 (1,101 males and 579 females)
- Nationalities: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq (91% of total 2016 arrivals)

→ Multiple languages

English, French, Arabic, Farsi, Tigrigna, Bambara

→ Multiple modules

Comparability between refugees, with individuals in country of residence, with international standards

II. Qualitative

- Individual In-depth Interviews and Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews
- 260 participants in 16 centers across Italy and Greece
- Non-overlapping sample with quantitative
- Composition: nationalities as in quantitative data, oversampling women, variation in marital status

III. Literacy assessment

(developed with OECD)

- To avoid mismeasurement and lack of comparability of education standards across countries
- **Computer**-based measurement of proficiency
- Results are **comparable** across all countries with PIAAC data or equivalent
- Subsample of the quantitative sample
- Administered in official languages
- 45 minutes on average for completion
- Validity checks

Five key messages

1

Heterogeneity among asylum seekers

- Country of origin, family composition

2

High cost of journey: monetary and physical/psychological

- 3 to 4 years of income (at poverty line)
- High incidence of violence (Italy route) - high risks incurred during sea crossing

3

Education, past work experience, and literacy proficiency assessment suggest asylum seekers will supply low-skill labor

- Literacy proficiency low, comparable to recent migrants to the EU.

4

High incidence of mental distress

- Up to 70 percent of severe symptoms of anxiety and depression

5

A robust data and knowledge agenda for understanding migration and forced migration needed

- Many unanswered questions: host communities, panel data...

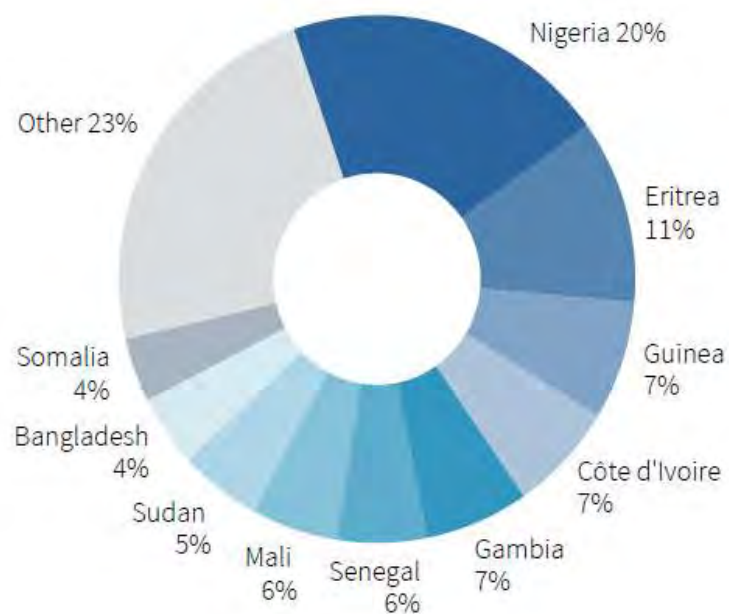
Who are the asylum seekers?

Context and demographics

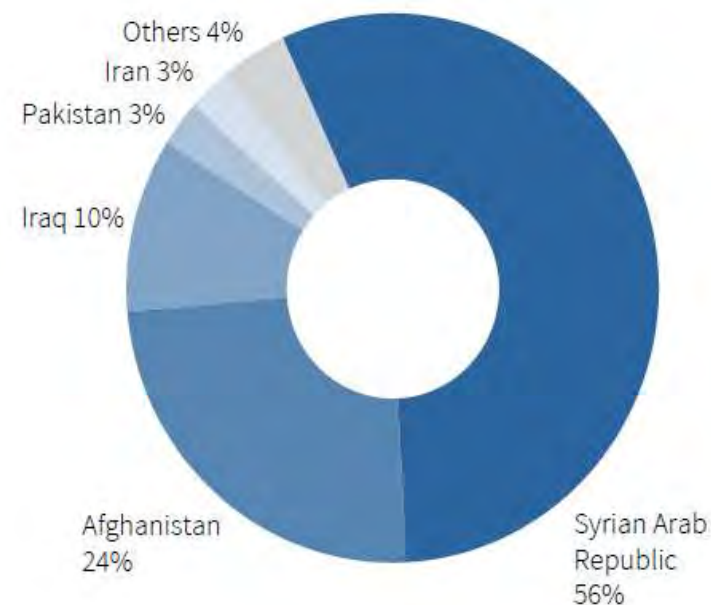


Nationality composition of asylum seekers

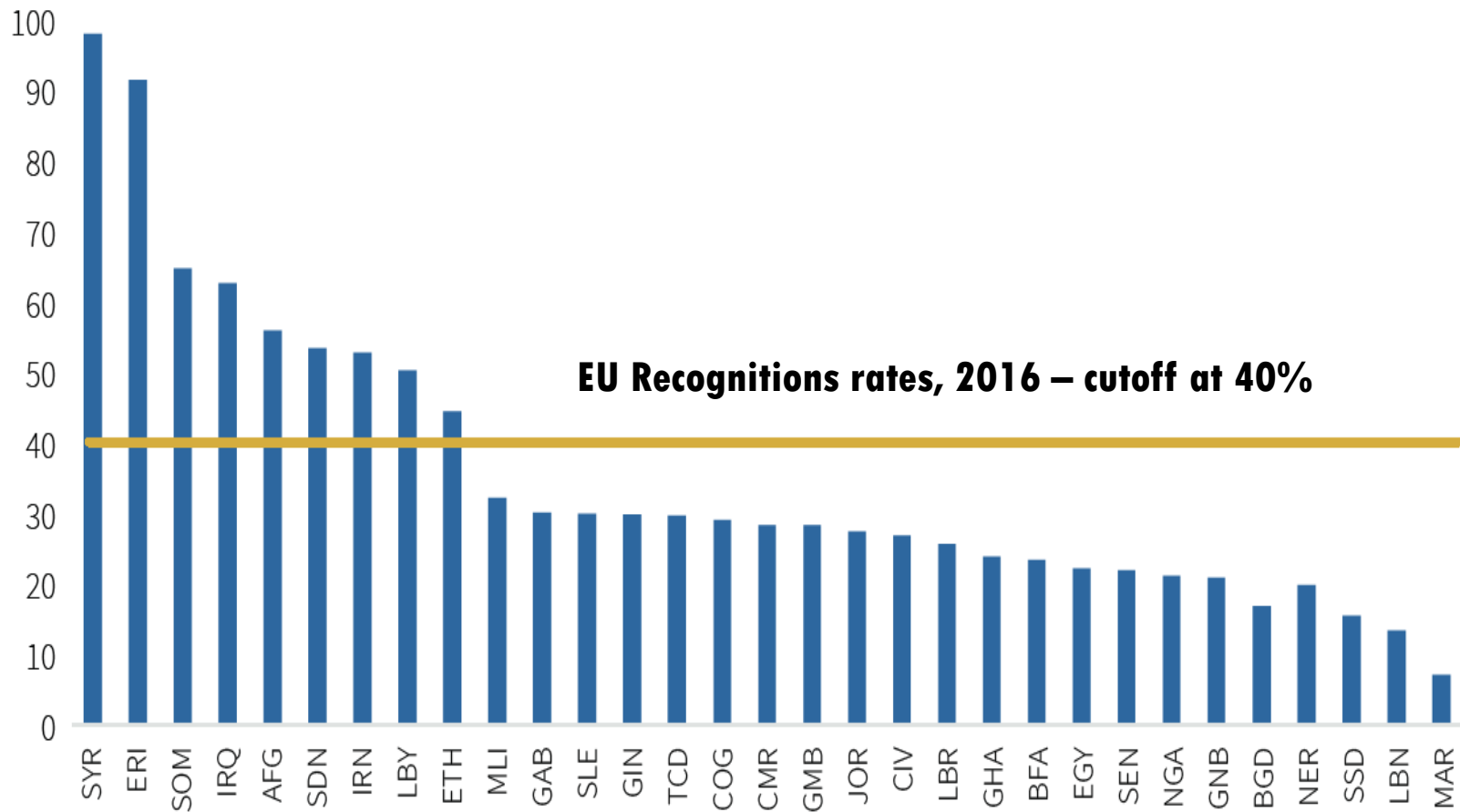
Nationalities arriving to Italy



Nationalities arriving to Greece

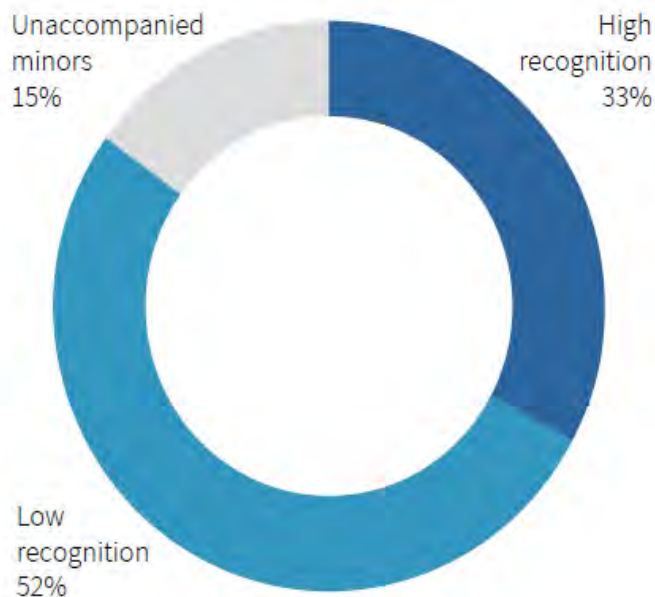


Migrants face different odds of recognition

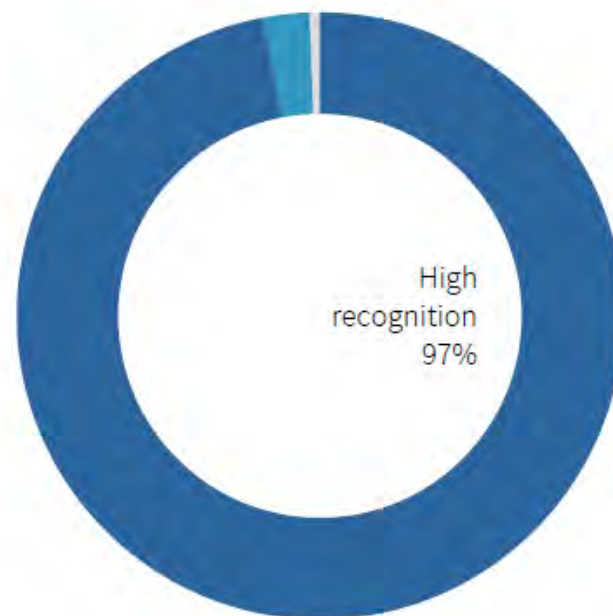


In Greece, most will likely be granted asylum; in Italy, the flow is mixed

Diverse origins in Italy

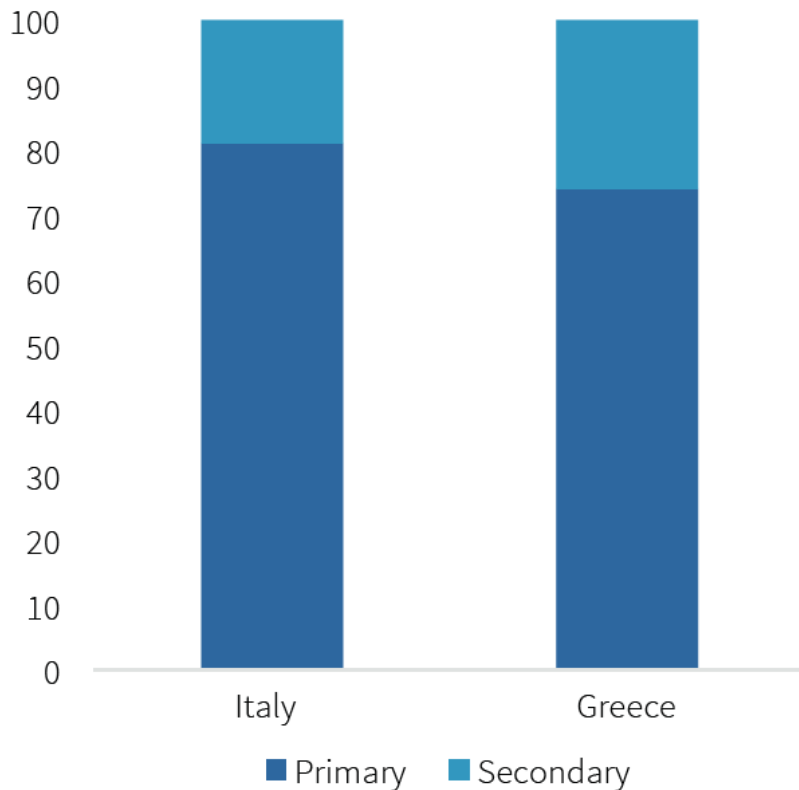


High recognition countries in Greece



Not everyone came directly from their country of origin to the EU; some were settled elsewhere

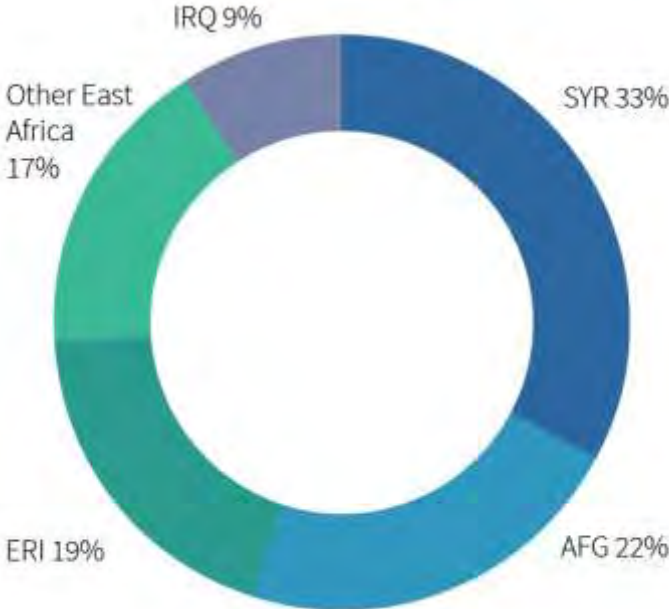
By arrival



- **27%** of Syrians were in Turkey or Iraq before deciding to move to Europe.
- **34%** of Afghans had lived in Iran, some for a long period, before taking on this journey.
- **18%** of West Africans arriving to Italy were settled in Libya or another West African country before migrating.

Asylum seekers of high-recognition-rate countries

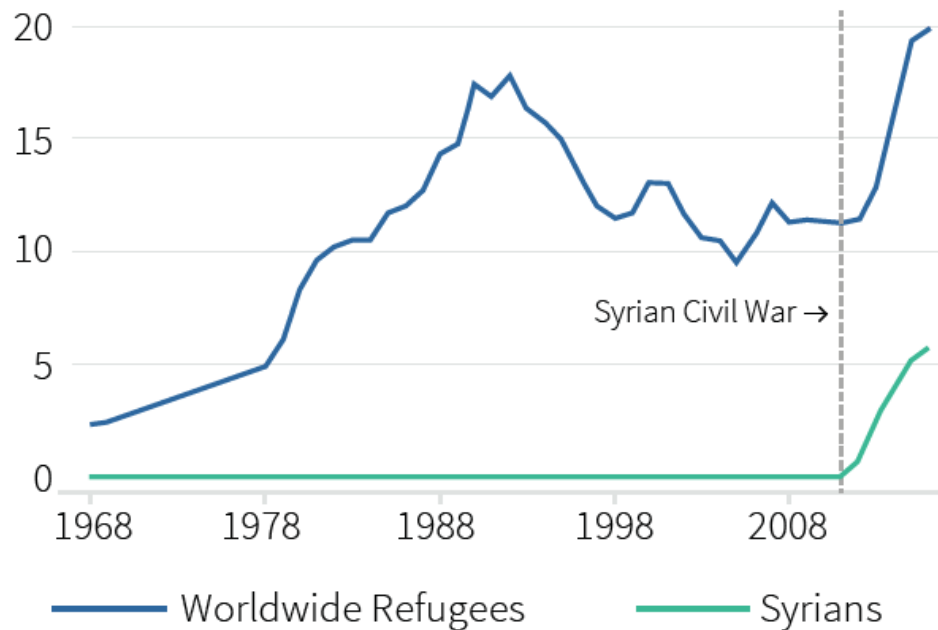
Flow from high-recognition countries, by nationality, Greece and Italy, 2016



Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample, and UNHCR administrative data

Syrian asylum seekers in the E.U.

Historic Data: Worldwide and Syrians

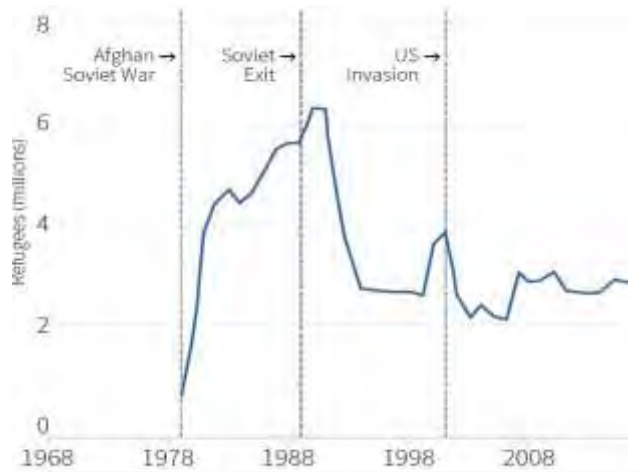


"I wanted to give my children a better education and decided to go to Germany... Many people where I was in the camp in Turkey had already left for Germany."

Syrian woman

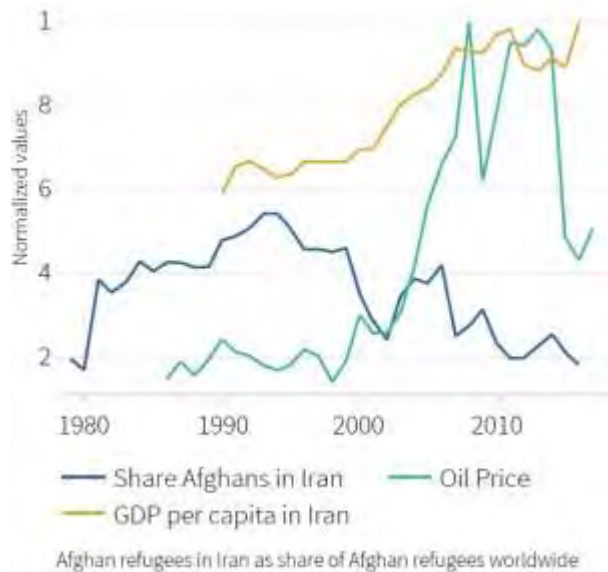
- **27 percent are secondary movers (from Turkey)**
- **2/3 are families moving together**

Afghan asylum seekers in the E.U.



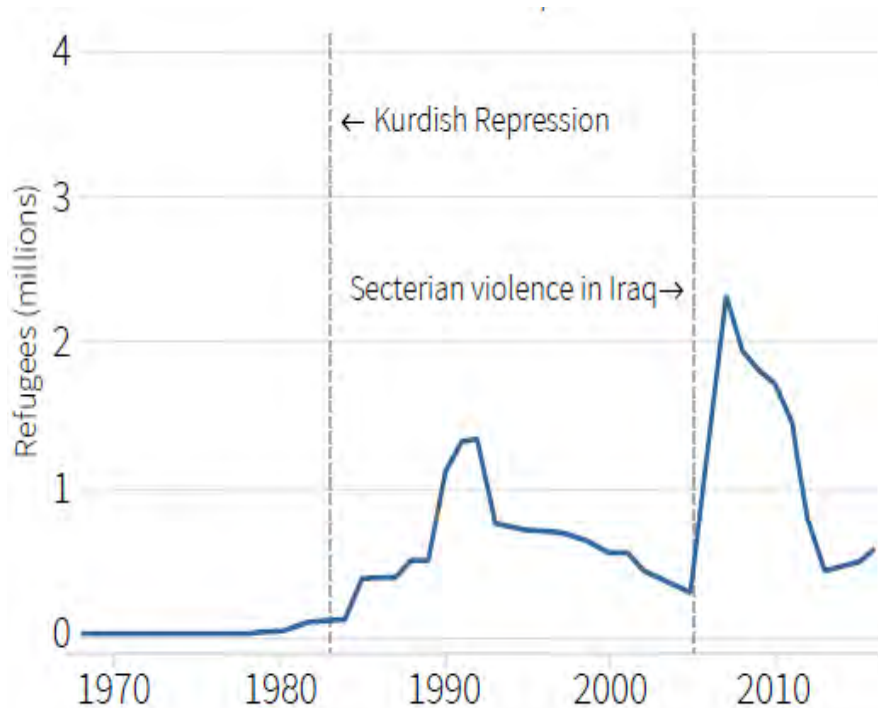
“I weighed it all up and thought to myself, when a country has been at war for 38 years there is no hope for the future.”

Afghan man



- **34 percent are secondary movers (from Iran)**
- **3/4 of migrants are families moving together**

Iraqi asylum seekers in the E.U.



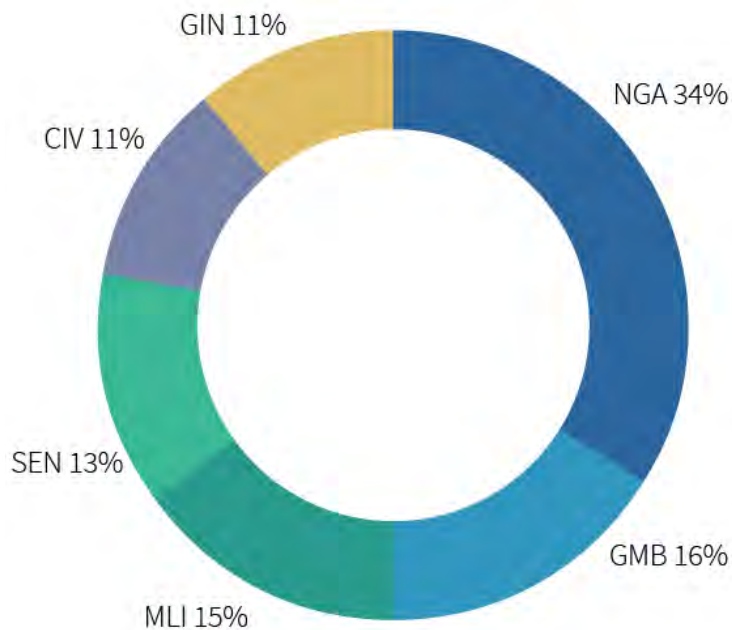
“We started thinking of leaving when my brother-in-law was killed by a car bomb that was placed on his car in 2014”

Iraqi woman

- **Almost no instances of secondary migration**
- **70 percent are families moving together**

Asylum seekers of low-recognition-rate countries are concentrated in Italy

Flow from low-recognition countries, by nationality, 2016



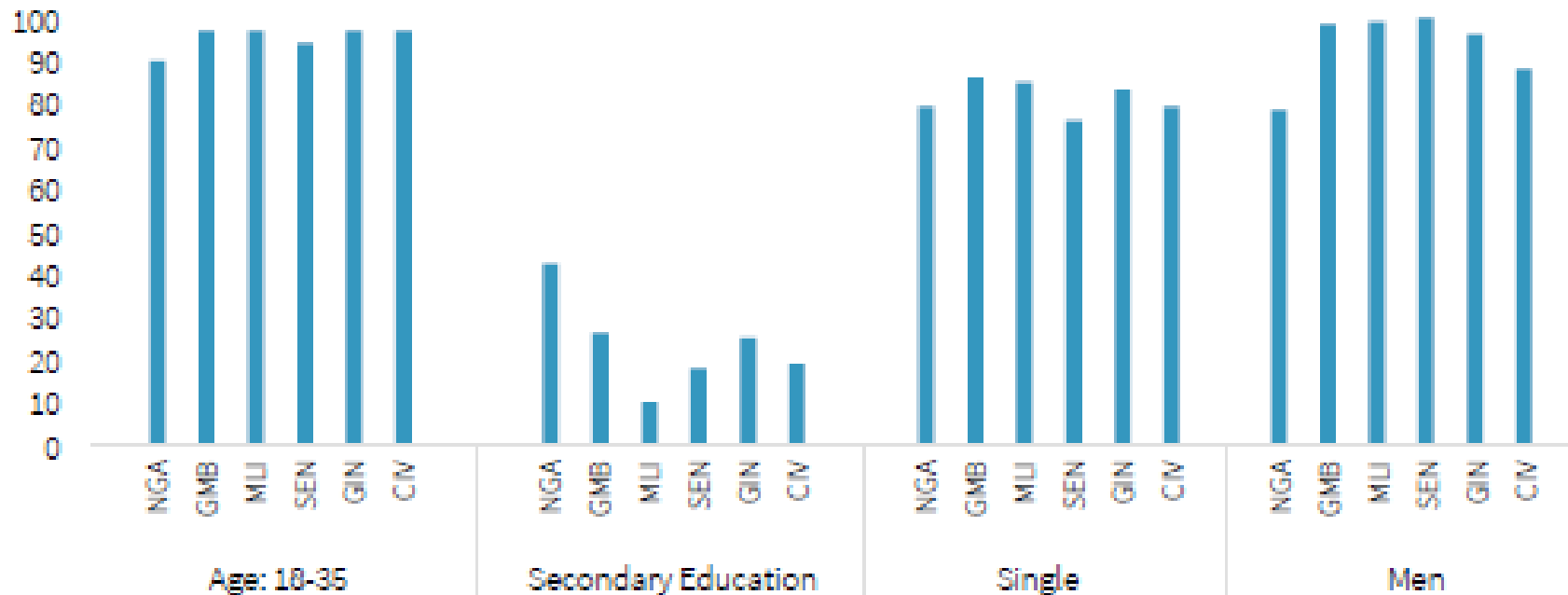
8% are secondary movers from Libya; the conflict altered the flows

From a destination country



To a transit country

Overall, quite homogenous group among those from low-recognition countries: young, single, men



Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample

The decision to migrate is in line with the demographic profile of asylum seekers in Greece and Italy

Greece

Idea to migrate evolves through **family discussion. Decision making power follows lines of patriarchy and seniority**

Italy

Idea to migrate usually described as evolving through own initiative.

Evaluation of migration as an option and planning happen in **discussions with peers rather than family.**

Overall, differences in profile across groups

Category	Country	Secondary Migration	Male	Single	Average Age
High Recognition	Syrians	27	64	29	33
	Afghans	34	70	32	33
	Iraqis	4	61	27	33
	Eritreans	24	67	57	26
	Other East Africans	23	86	44	26
Low Recognition	West Africans	18	90	81	24

Single women asylum seekers

Low among women arriving to Greece

High among women arriving to Italy:

- 53% of single women from Nigeria
- 25% from Eritrea

The journey



The Journey to the European Union followed a few main routes



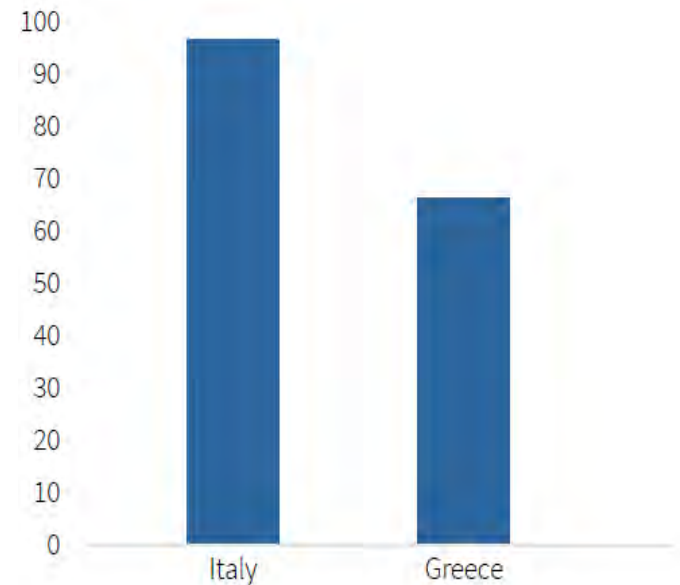
The journey was longer and more dangerous to Italy

3 relatively large transit points

A median of a **month and a half** in each transit point for those arriving into Italy, compared to over a **week** in Greece

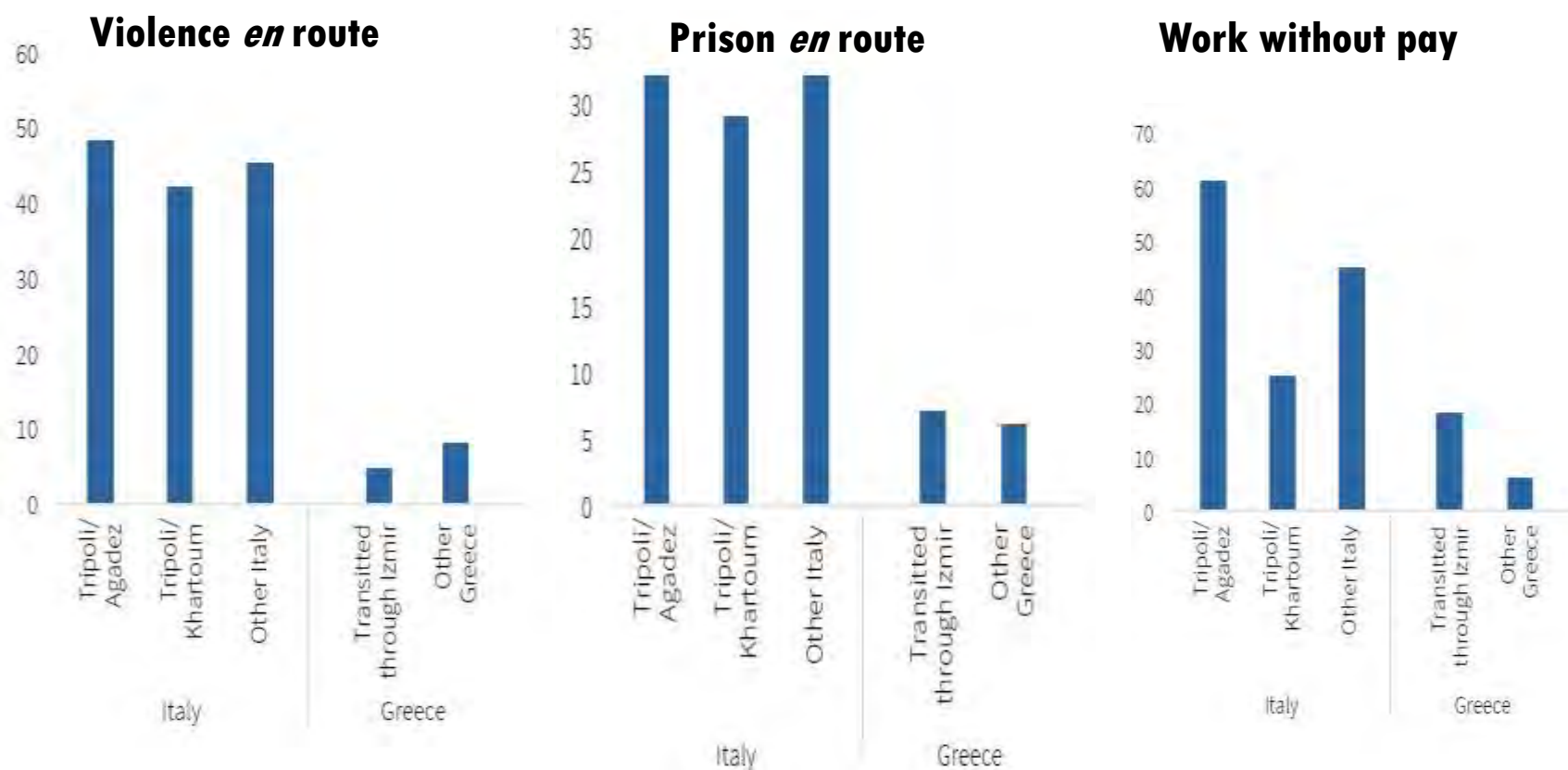
67% of those arriving to Italy crossed the Mediterranean on an inflatable boat.

Rescue at sea



Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample

Asylum seekers encountered violence in transit, particularly those coming from Africa



The Journey is expensive, and represents three to four years of income of a poor person in countries of origin

Payment by route



Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample

Summary findings

"I knew from Satellite TV and the news that the route was dangerous. We had heard all the stories about people drowning in the Mediterranean. I personally know an entire family who drowned. But our lives were in danger so we had no choice."

Afghan man

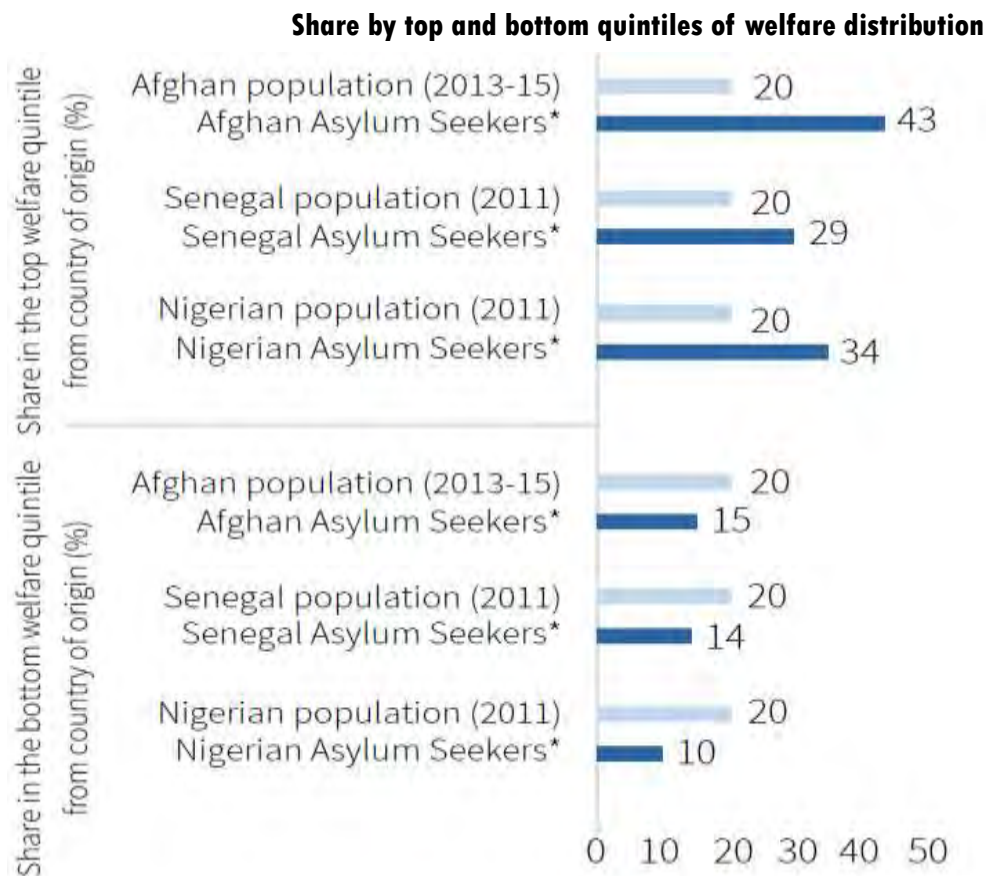
- **Cost of migration is high**
- **General awareness of costs and benefits**
- **Speaks to the perceived benefits of migration and deteriorating conditions at home**

Who are the asylum seekers?

Living standards and human capital

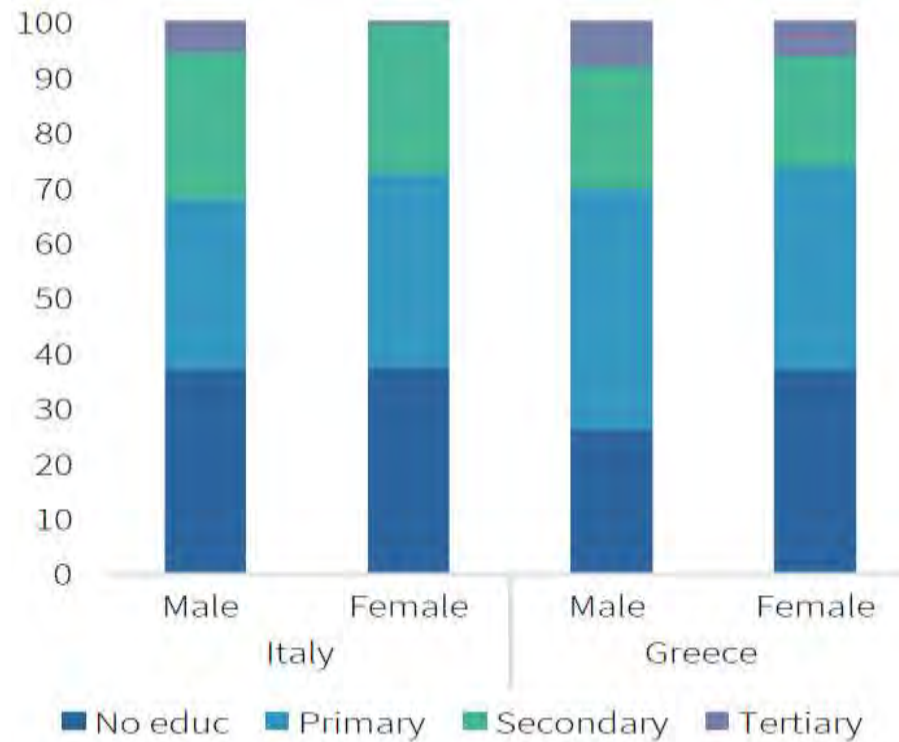


Many asylum seekers surveyed were wealthier than those who stayed



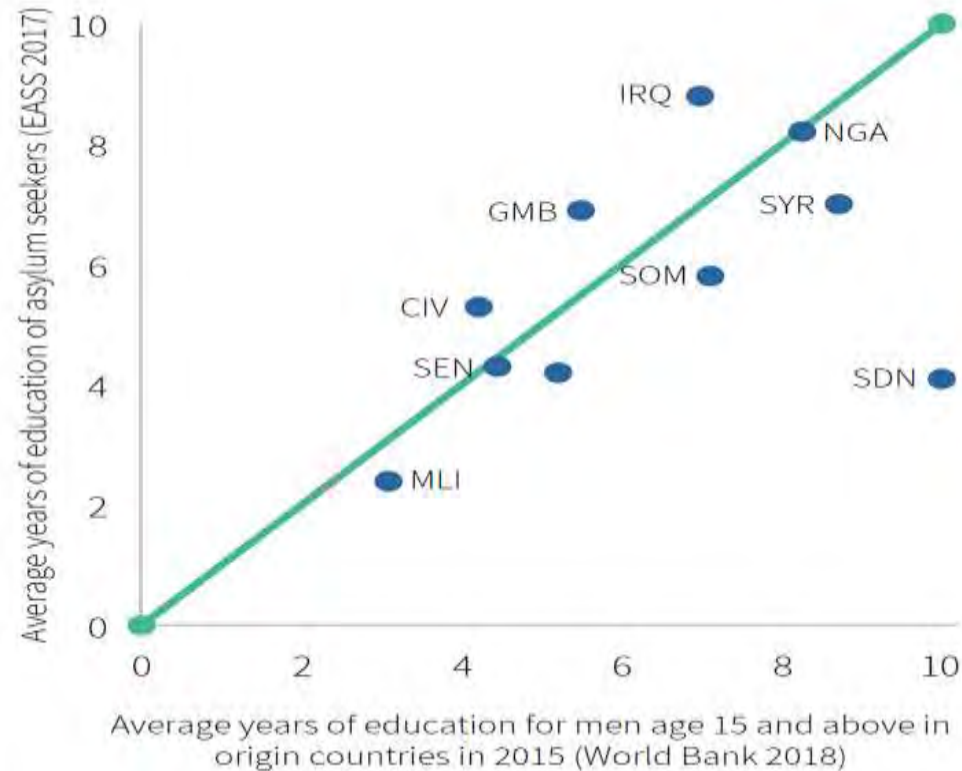
Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample, Nigeria 2011 Living Standard Measurement Survey; Senegal 2011 (ESPS II).

On average, asylum seekers in Italy and Greece had low levels of education

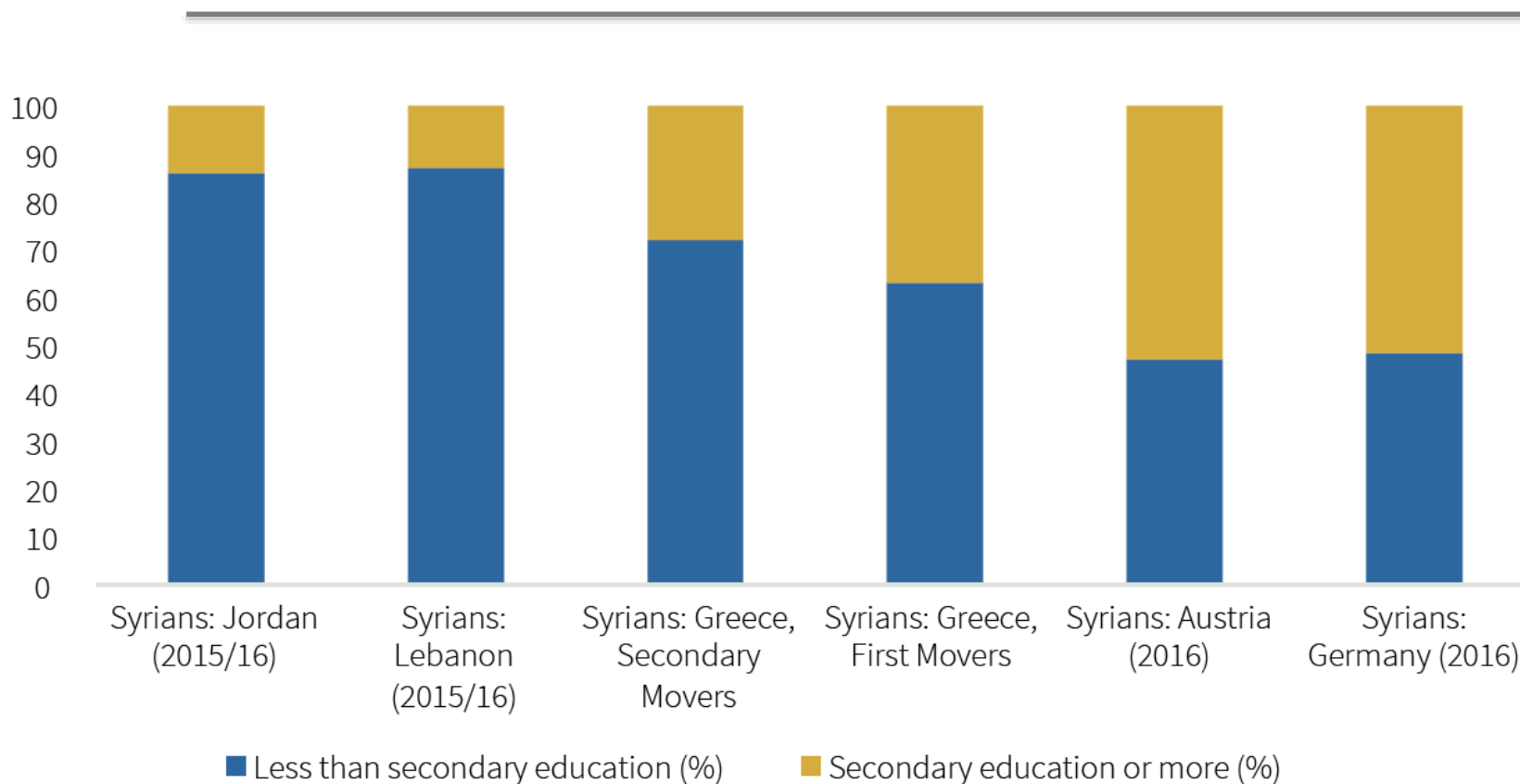


Sources: Data from EASS 2017 – Weighted sample

Education levels are in line with education levels in countries of origin

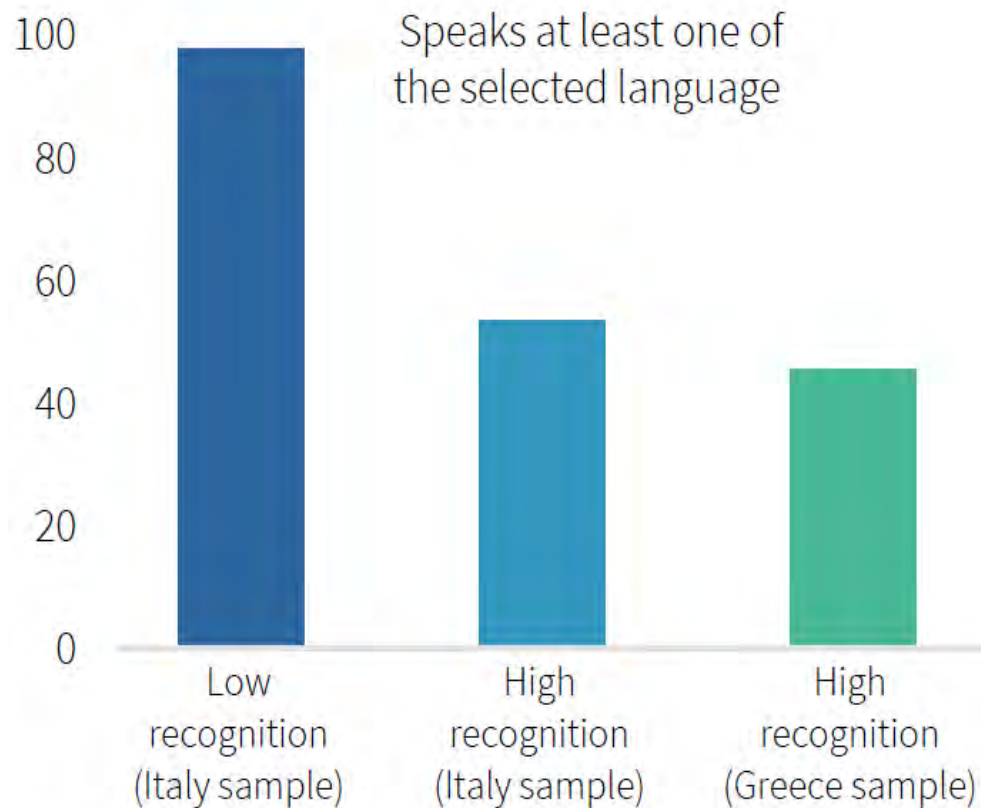


For Syrians, clear differences between the waves of migration

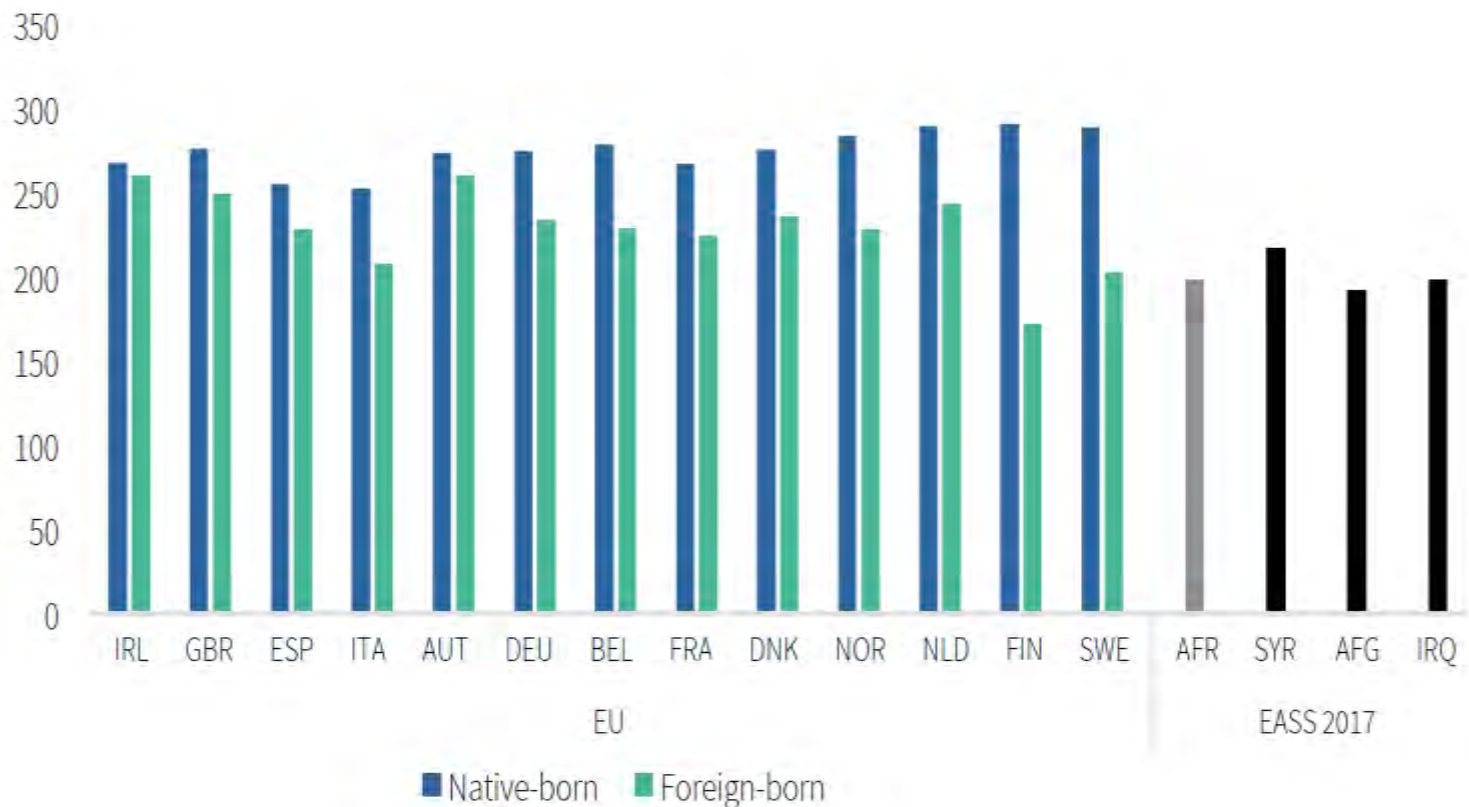


Sources: EASS 2017; for Jordan, KRI, and Lebanon: 2015-16 SRHCS; for Austria, Buber-Ennser et al. 2016 (limited to population 20-59 years); and for Germany, the 2016 IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey.

Many asylum seekers speak a European language: many Africans in Italy come from countries where French, English or Portuguese is spoken

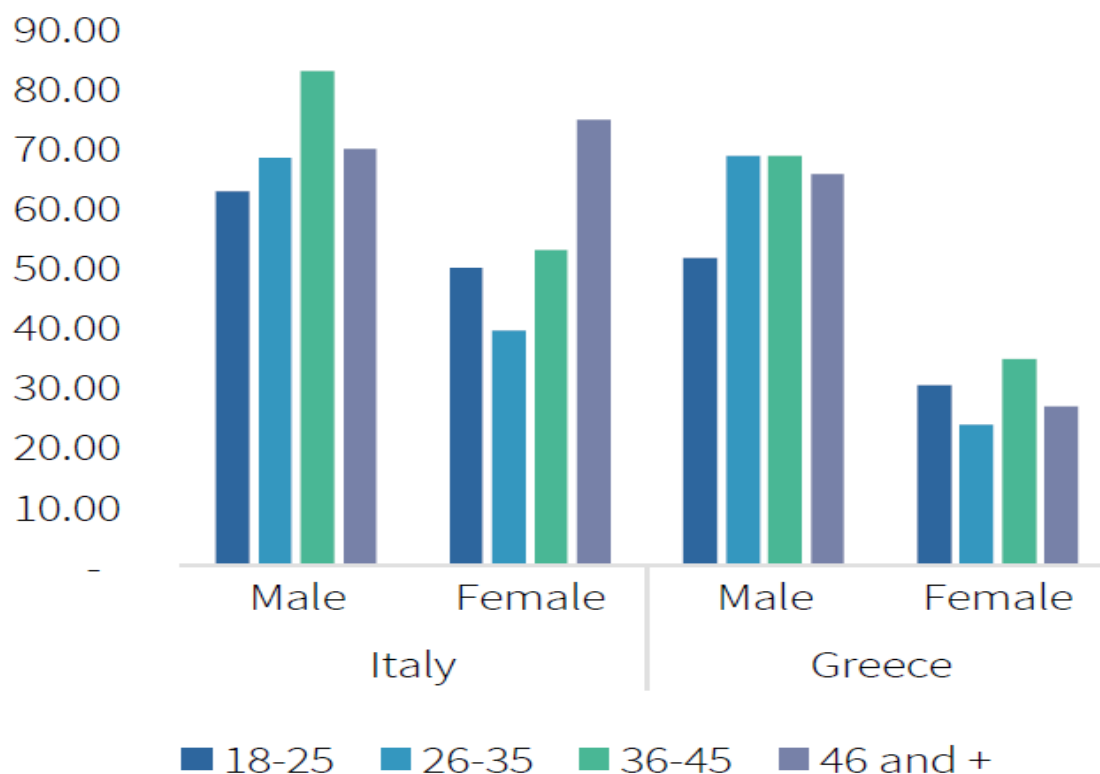


Asylum seekers have limited proficiency in designated language, but their PIAAC scores are comparable to those of migrants who have been in the EU for less than five years



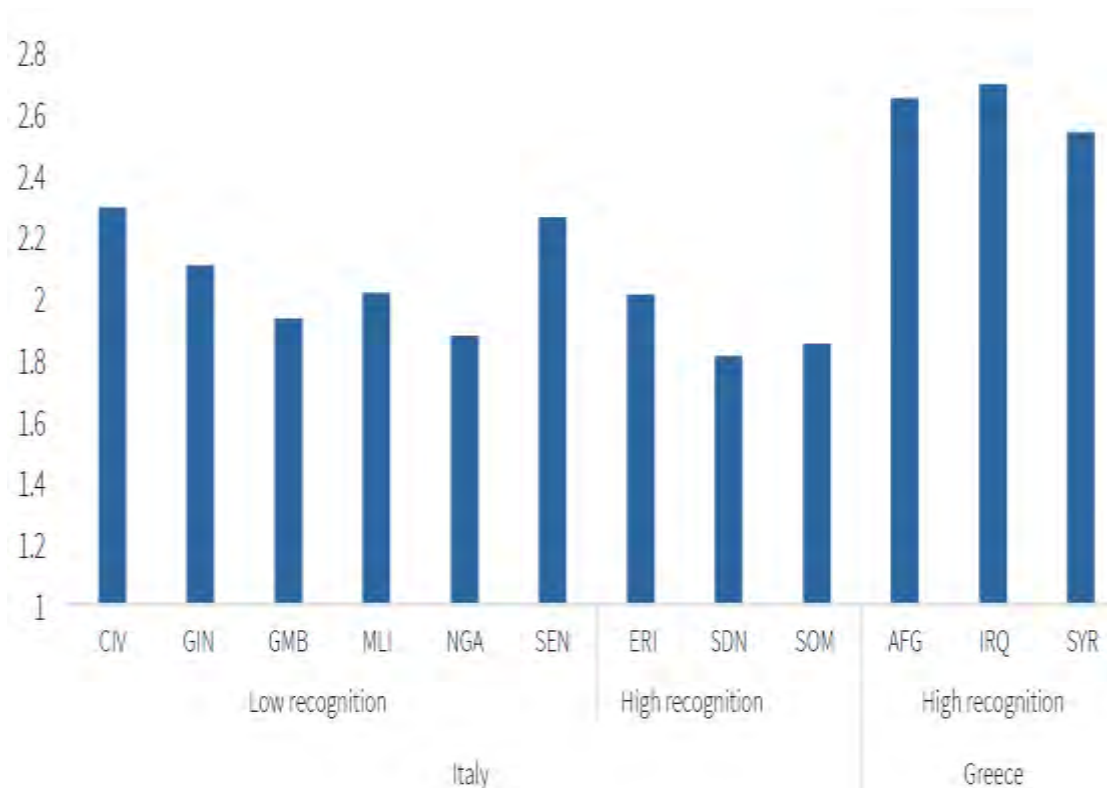
Many asylum seekers had work experience: in Italy, most had basic occupation such as construction and agriculture

Employment by age and gender



Mental health as an important policy dimension: Instances of mental distress were widespread...

Severe Mental Distress, GSI by Country of Origin



"I don't know anything about the future. I don't know if they will give us asylum here or deport us. I don't know if they will give us a house. I don't want to know. I can't handle any more pressure."

Iraqi woman

... and may be exacerbated by pressure from family dynamics at this time of uncertainty

Men: stress/apathy from inability to fulfill their perceived roles as providers and protectors

Women: greater role within the household as they replicate their traditional female roles around family and household responsibilities in camps.

- **Additional burden on women**
 - **But also comfort in clinging to known roles and norms at a time of high uncertainty**
-

The men help us wash the clothes. They help us with the housework. But they have no work. This is very hard for them.

Afghan women's focus group

Insights into Policy



Insights into Policies




MORE DATA AND KNOWLEDGE: The need to collect more data and further build the evidence; challenges to collecting data on transient and vulnerable populations; impact of policies

EDUCATION AND SKILLS: Policies to support the early identification of skills of asylum seekers, refugees or other migrants to tailor education and labor market policies in host or origin countries

MENTAL HEALTH: Policies to support the early identification of mental health needs of asylum seekers, refugees or other migrants

SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING: Policies directed at combating smugglers and human trafficking networks could help curb the flows, but they could also have unintended negative consequences

VULNERABILITIES IN ORIGIN/THIRD COUNTRIES: Policies to tackle vulnerabilities in countries of origin: asylum seekers come from situations that, in their views, make the costly and perilous journey worth it

An illustration of a man and a woman walking on a sandy beach. The man is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants, and the woman is wearing a long blue dress. They are walking towards the right, leaving footprints in the sand. In the background, there are waves crashing onto the shore. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

Asylum Seekers in the European Union:

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ANNEX: Skills test validation

Asylum seekers and worldwide population , scoring below 1 proficiency

