



Tbilisi, where almost half of the country's urban population is based. While Tbilisi is responsible for over 50 per cent of national production, other regions are less developed. For example, the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli – the only two of Georgia's nine regions in which minorities make up a majority of the population – have struggled to keep up with the rapid economic growth of the capital. Both remain predominantly agricultural regions.

Rural–urban disparities have reinforced existing inequalities experienced by certain minority populations. These gaps are especially evident in terms of service access: for example, only 29 per cent of the households in Samtskhe-Javakheti and 44 per cent in Kvemo Kartli have bathroom facilities. Regional disparities, poverty and unemployment have been flagged as key priorities by the government in the new Social-Economic Development Strategy for 2020, which if implemented could benefit a large proportion of Georgia's minorities.

Greece

Under the continuing burden of recession and austerity measures imposed by the EU

to manage Greek debt, many Greeks have been impoverished by unemployment, wage limits, reduced welfare benefits and rising household costs. At the same time, Greece has also experienced a large influx of migrants and refugees due to its geographic proximity to areas of conflict and displacement in the Middle East. The Greek coastguard detained over 17,000 undocumented migrants, over half from Syria, in the first eight months of 2014 alone. Inadequacies in the Greek asylum system over the last decade have resulted in thousands of migrants trapped in detention centres, suspended in a legal limbo without the necessary documentation. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) noted in its December 2014 *ECRI Report on Greece* that in the centre of Athens many migrants rent and live in sub-standard accommodation, often deprived of access to public social welfare services, with an increasing number who are homeless. According to the report, NGOs are barred by law from providing housing to undocumented migrants, adding to the destitution.

As the large-scale influx has coincided with one of Greece's worst economic and social crises

for decades, attitudes towards the migrant and refugee population in Greece appear to be among the most negative in Europe. A Pew Research Center survey of seven EU countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom) in spring 2014 found that anti-immigrant sentiment was highest among respondents in Greece (86 per cent).

At its extreme, hostility towards migrants and refugees has extended to racist violence which has blighted some urban areas. According to the Greek Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) annual report for 2014, well over half of the incidents of hate crime recorded by the network in 2014 were committed against immigrants or refugees. The majority of attacks occurred in public places or on public transport, often in the centre of Athens in neighbourhoods with concentrations of immigrant and refugee residents. In the great majority of cases the victims believed they were targeted because of their ethnic identity and other characteristics marking them out as 'foreigners', such as skin colour and religion. Half of the attacks were reportedly carried out by groups of offenders, apparently including extremist groups. A number of the incidents were allegedly perpetrated by police officers; some occurred in police stations and detention centres. While providing a picture of the racist and xenophobic violence occurring in urban areas in Greece, these incidents are likely to represent only a fraction of racist crimes committed given that many (especially undocumented) victims are reluctant to report them.

In addition to hostility against migrants and refugees, negative attitudes prevail about other minorities in Greece. Public attitudes towards Jews in Greece appear to be among the most negative in Europe. Almost half (47 per cent) of the respondents in Greece in the 2014 Pew Research Center survey were unfavourable towards Jews. Another survey, the Anti-Defamation League's *ADL Global 100*, also suggested that anti-Semitic attitudes were more prevalent in Greece than other European nations: 69 per cent of the survey's respondents in Greece were judged to be harbouring anti-Semitic attitudes on the basis of their agreement with anti-Semitic tropes presented in survey

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Case study by Linda Szabó

How the redevelopment of Józsefváros is pushing out Budapest's minorities

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In recent years Budapest's most stigmatized neighbourhood, Józsefváros, has been undergoing significant change. 'Józsefváros is being rebuilt,' goes the municipality's slogan – the only question is for whom. While Józsefváros has long been one of the city's most diverse areas, with the highest concentration of Roma and migrant populations, the local municipality's plans for the area threaten to displace its most underprivileged groups, including poor minorities.

Józsefváros has always been attractive for newcomers and migrating traders, though, beginning with the arrival in the late 19th century of Jewish merchants and then Roma musicians, who moved here to play at local restaurants. But while Józsefváros – with the exception of the Palace Quarter – was never considered an affluent part of town, the appearance of slums in the area only became obvious in the 1960s as plans to refurbish



public housing stock were not implemented. At that time, due to the serious shortage of residential housing in Budapest, multiple families were forced to share apartments and the local council did not allocate sufficient funds for the maintenance of its buildings.

Subsequently, from the mid-1970s, a construction boom allowed the most affluent tenants to flee the overcrowded and deteriorating tenement houses. At the same time, a state-led programme which dismantled the impoverished Roma colonies on the outskirts forced many families to move into inner city neighbourhoods such as Józsefváros. By the 1980s, the area had become highly stigmatized due to its bad housing stock, the relatively high number of poor Roma and the concentration of criminal activities such as prostitution in certain neighbourhoods.

The country's reintegration into the global market economy has only worsened the situation of those living in the district. Although most apartments were quickly privatized over the 1990s, the highest number of social houses remained in District 8. The local municipality could not sell its property, either because it was not allowed to by law due to the poor housing conditions or because the tenants could not afford to buy their residences. The efficiency of social regeneration projects based on the accessibility of EU funds has been very limited so far. At the same time, more and more migrants became interested in certain disused areas following the collapse of state socialism; for instance, the underutilized land around Józsefváros railway station was occupied by Chinese and other migrant traders.

Yet despite the fact that these migrant-run businesses have provided poorer residents with lively and inexpensive retail areas, their contribution has never been recognized. On the contrary, their operation is often presented negatively in public media. Though the local municipality has not launched a directly xenophobic or racist campaign, in 2013 it decided to close down the 23-year-old Chinese market, reportedly to construct a local sports

facility, and closure took place in June 2014.

Presumably, the municipality expects further growth in the number of upwardly mobile or upper middle-class residents in the district – most of whom at present are concentrated in a part of the district that already underwent significant redevelopment in the early 2000s. This first major renewal project of the district was carried out in public–private partnership as old social housing blocks were demolished to accommodate private developments, raising property prices in the area to the highest in the district – in the process making housing for the original tenants unaffordable. A significant number of the more than 1,000 households evicted from the neighbourhood were Roma. Some of them were able to stay in the district, but others had to leave, including many who decided to take cash compensation instead of another apartment.

It is very likely that, in the coming years, other housing blocks will be demolished, and the original tenants as well as retailers catering to the current local communities will have to move. The district mayor has publicly promised to transform the area from a 'ghetto full of criminals' to a 'university town', yet it is unclear to what extent minorities and other marginalized groups will be able to share in this vision. This form of urban regeneration is supported by the national government, too, which recently designated a campus area for a newly established university in the district. The new reconstruction project, as opposed to the previous one, is being carried out mainly from public funding and will affect around 2,200 households until the end of 2017. The redevelopment includes plans to replace social housing with university buildings, again threatening the living space of Roma families concentrated in the area. Unless the local housing movement is able to successfully stand up for the rights of the tenants concerned by both the continuing public–private partnership development and the national government-led project, a number of the current inhabitants may be pushed out to the margins of Budapest or even outside the city altogether – a situation that will leave them even more invisible than before. ■

Left: A derelict building in Józsefváros, Budapest, 2014. *Neményi Márton*

questions. However, despite the apparently high level of anti-Jewish sentiment in Greece suggested by these surveys, incidents of violence against Jews appear to be infrequent. This may be due to the small size of Greece's Jewish minority – numbering a little over 5,000 people, residing mostly in the cities of Athens, Larissa and Thessaloniki. However, cemeteries, Holocaust memorials and other sites have been targeted, with the number of incidents in 2014 reportedly exceeding the total for 2012 and 2013 together, according to the *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014* report. This included, in December, the vandalism of a Jewish cemetery in Larissa with swastikas and abusive graffiti. Notably, however, there were no personal physical attacks against Jews reported.

Conditions for Greece's Roma community, estimated to be in the region of 265,000 persons, or approximately 2.5 per cent of the population, are characterized by social exclusion and deprivation. Many Roma live in sub-standard housing with inadequate water supply and sewage facilities on the periphery of urban areas and on the edge of small towns and villages. Roma have also been subject to racist abuse and violence. In November 2014, three men were convicted of a violent racist attack on a Roma woman Paraskevi Kokoni and her nephew in the town of Etoliko, western Greece, in the previous year. The victim believed that she was targeted because she is a relative of a leader of the local Roma community. This attack did not occur in isolation, but in the context of a series of threats and attacks attributed to members and supporters of the extreme right-wing Golden Dawn party.

Despite the strain on the Greek state in managing Greece's financial and social crisis there have been some positive developments. In September 2014 a new anti-racism law was adopted by the Greek parliament which strengthened the response to racist violence and incitement. An extensive investigation of Golden Dawn was pursued across 2014. The parliamentary immunity of all Golden Dawn MPs was removed and they were charged with membership of a criminal organization, along with other criminal charges. Incremental gains are being made in improving living conditions and attacking the social exclusion of Roma

through the National Strategy for the Social Integration of Roma 2012–20. Legislation in 2011 promised an overhaul of Greece's asylum system. This was delayed, in part by government austerity measures, but the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has recently noted some improvements, including reduced waiting times and better quality of interviews. Nevertheless, in January 2015, UNHCR maintained that other EU countries should not return asylum seekers to have their applications processed in Greece – a clear sign that more still needs to be done. The new government, elected in January 2015, has released many detainees from immigration detention centres and promised further reform. However, tensions persist in the areas in which undocumented migrants and refugees are concentrated. Municipal authorities, especially in Athens, have struggled to provide adequate support and housing. Some local business people and residents blame migrants for the ghettoization and deterioration of their neighbourhoods; however, this does not acknowledge the constraints faced by migrants without the necessary legal documentation.

Latvia

While Russians comprise the largest of Latvia's minorities, amounting to over a quarter (27.2 per cent) of the population, the country includes a diverse range of smaller ethnicities as well. There are also, in a country with a population totalling 2.1 million, more than 270,000 'non-citizens': this category was introduced after Latvia's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union to designate former Soviet citizens without direct links to the pre-Soviet Latvian Republic. These people were not granted automatic Latvian citizenship; instead they became 'non-citizens' eligible for naturalization subject to conditions – including passing Latvian language tests.

The naturalization process has since been simplified through successive legal amendments, mostly to satisfy the conditions of EU membership, which was obtained in 2004. But while more than 142,000 were granted citizenship between 1995 and January 2014, applications for naturalization have since fallen. Moreover, while the children of 'non-citizens' may be registered as Latvian citizens by at least one parent – and many