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Mobile Citizenship, States of Exception and (non)Border Regimes in the Pandemic and Post-Covid19 Cyprus

Nicos Trimikliniotis, Myria Georgiou, Erol Kaymak, Afroditi-Maria Koulaxi, Melis Mevsimler, Giorgos Charalambous, Vassilis Tsianos, Corina Demetriou, Ari Sitas, Michelangelo Anastasiou, and Emmanuel Achiri

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Mobile Citizenship, States of Exception, and (non)Border Regimes in the Pandemic and post-Covid19 Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of the emergency measures on community relations, fundamental rights, and mobility rights during the Covid19 pandemic in de facto divided Cyprus. It explored states of exception, as well as solidarity aiming to counter those restrictions. Internal and external borders were mobilised to separate 'us' from 'them', shaped by the pandemic policies and media discourses via a hygiene emergency regime with suspension of rights, hitting severely the most vulnerable, often migrants and asylum-seekers. The hostile and securitised climate was generated by the political elites and the media and was built on the 'Cypriot states of exception' and colonial laws by extending old and generating new bordering processes. An illiberal policy frame towards migrants and asylum-seekers was manifested in form of a *state exception of immobility*, which affects the relations between the two communities, the division of Cyprus, peace-keeping and peace-making. Contra this hostile environment and given the welfare state crisis, acts for citizenship have generated praxis-based solidarity. Via digital networking, we observed processes of reorganisation of activism. This is prefiguring a potential for reassembling socialities, paving ways for social imaginaries of a *mobile citizenship* transcending old and new divisions of Cyprus and the world.

Keywords: Border regimes; states of exception of immobility; migration/asylum; mobile citizenship; solidarity; socialities.

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1. Introduction

For years we have studied questions of rights, migration, mobility, exclusions, resistance struggles, the divisions of Cyprus problem and the states of exception. Invoking the global emergency of the Covid19 pandemic, Governments introduced practices of re-assembling of borders, relations, institutions, and social interactions that are both worrisome and fascinating. These are examined in the context of Cyprus but tell us also about processes that exceed the boundaries of this small island in the East Mediterranean.

Covid-19 related measures have reshaped the regimes of rights attached to citizenship, leaving marks on society, exacerbating old divisions, and configuring new ones. Relationships between the two communities have become even more difficult because of the reframed conditions of mobility within the 'cold' conflict and divide of Cyprus. This has impacted rights of citizens, and more intensively still the rights of non-citizens (asylum-seekers and migrants), with regulations enhancing new controls and restrictions to their mobility, increased suspicion towards persons moving across borders and divides, generated by new Covid-generated migration policies and fears of Covid-19 infections.

The study aimed to address how the two communities have been impacted by COVID-19 and how citizenship is being reassembled by examining the implications of restrictions on individual freedoms and political participation due to the 'state of exception' generated by the pandemic. The research sought to address the following questions:

- How are internal and external borders mobilized to separate 'Us' from 'Them' within and against contexts of securitisation and humanitarianism – Us/Them determined within an elastic biopolitics of the border and the politics of security and care?
- How do political and media constructions of the identities of (i) migrant and asylum seekers and (ii) those at the other side of the divide inform politics of community and hostility, of care and exclusion?
- How do, if at all, performances of solidarity shape mobile commons and contest border regimes online and offline?
- Does digitization compensate for restricted mobility and physical encounters? If so, how and in what ways is solidarity reconfigured digitally?

- How do the discursive construction of borders, citizenship and mobility compare between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and media?

The 'pandemic' and 'post-pandemic era' must read as a continuum which contains both continuities and ruptures. This study was conducted during the period of the pandemic and was finished during the stages when the restrictive measures were being eased or altogether abandoned by most states. With the loosening of restrictions, we are witnessing major transformations and turmoil, which have been highlighted by the war in Ukraine, particularly after the Russian invasion.

In Cyprus, the first casualty of the Covid-19 measures was the imposition of restrictions of crossings across the Green Line. This sparked demonstrations abruptly halted because of the lockdown. The Covid-19 crisis and the restrictive measures were then and are still now reshaping the boundaries of rights, forging new states of exception, i.e., measures suspending the 'normal' (Agamben, 2005) and are reshaping the authoritarian practices and 'Cypriot states of exception' (Constantinou, 2008; Trimikliniotis 2010; 2018; Charalambous 2018; Ioannou and Charalambous 2022). However, around the globe, we are also witnessing new manifestations of *solidarities* and *socialities* connected mobile commons (Trimikliniotis et al, 2023).

The study focuses on the period that started with the pandemic in March 2020 until December 2022, but to compare this period and to be able to assess its continuities and ruptures, it was necessary to embark also on an analysis of the *pre-pandemic realities* that shape the Cyprus problem, the Cypriot states of exception, the relations between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, the governance of the buffer zone, as well as the migration and asylum governance in Cyprus.[10]

Methodologically a multi-method approach was used recorded in discourses and practices that shape the states of exception and resistance to them in the context of the pandemic and its aftermath (Appendix 2 on the research team and methodology). It carried out a policy analysis and media research. It combined interviews (Appendix 4), focus group with migrants,

[10] The report employs a neutral approach in the use of terms. This applies in how we describe the authorities in Cyprus as Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), only recognised by Turkey. Other terms: Greek-Cypriots (G/C) and Turkish-Cypriot (T/C).

locals, activists, human rights CSOs, policy makers (Appendix 3) and embarked on ethnographic research (Appendix 6). In total 73 persons were interviewed, some mere interviewed more than once: 31 interviews with migrants and 42 interviews with experts (Appendix 4). There are numerous deliverables (Appendix 2).

An executive summary of this report is provided in appendix 5. Also, a policy brief has been written on the basis of the findings of this study.

2. Bordering and the exception regime: before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

2.1 Mapping the terrain

Like other global crises, Covid-19 may have left its mark on democracy and fundamental rights in ways which are already visible and will probably become more apparent in the future. Although most of the restrictions are gradually being phased out in a race to assist the market economy return to profitability, there emerge two types of alarming phenomena which permeate state responses:

- Excessive policing of excessive measures, such as the prohibition to sit on the beach and violent arrests of swimmers witnessed in the months of May and June, fining migrants and persons with intellectual disabilities for being outdoors without a permit during lockdowns, even though no targeted measures were taken to inform them of the restrictions.
- The use of Covid as a pretext to suspend rights, such as the right to asylum, freedom from detention, freedom of assembly and the right to protest.
- The economic management of the pandemic, which shifts economic resources towards policing the measures and fining private individuals, whilst support to those most badly hit by the pandemic, such as small business owners, atypical workers and vulnerable persons in need of state support has been inadequate.
- The role of communications and media, both conventional and social media, has been crucial in these processes. On the one hand, the development of communication and

media technologies has been of vital importance, providing speedy information and allowing for communication and support during the difficult times of the lockdown. On the other hand, the public dependence on the communication and media systems has proved to be 'the Achilles' heel' in the process, where the media and communications have spread inaccurate information, exaggerated and amplified news, as well as fake news and conspiracy theories that questioned medicine, science and government measures, leading to further confusion, uncertainty and unwarranted fear and insecurity in situations, which are already tensed and worrying.

These phenomena must be seen against the backdrop of the authorities' uneven handling of non-compliance issues, the measures and the relaxations in the measures affecting private interests and a general climate of expanding administrative discretion with repeated issues of new ministerial orders, many of questionable legality. The ministerial orders must inevitably now be seen against a growing body of jurisprudence across the EU, which successfully challenged curfews, fines and disproportionate suspension of constitutional rights.

In Cyprus, these matters are mediated and entangles with the divisions of the country, a society torn by war and conflict.

Figure 1: *Map of Cyprus (Areas marked in red are territories designated as 'sovereign British bases')*

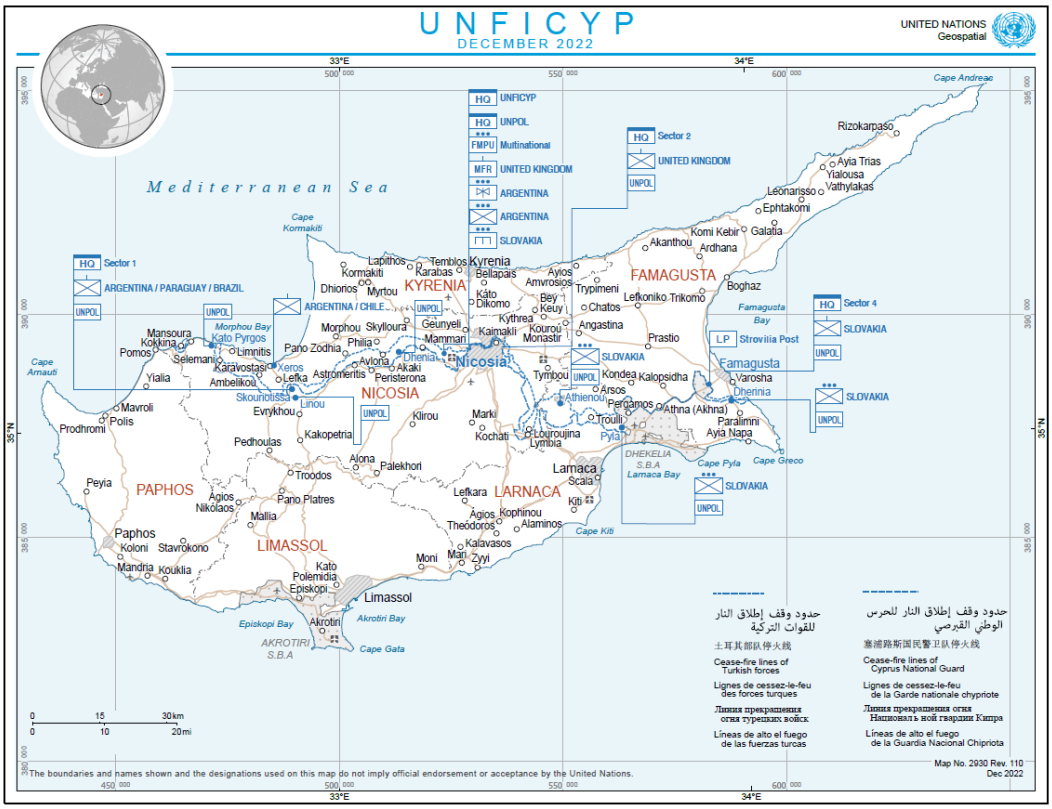


Figure 2: *Map of Cyprus contained in the UN SG draft report (UN 2023)*

The map in Figure 2 illustrates how the Unite Nations Force Cyprus (UNFICYP) divides its personnel for peace-keeping purposes reflecting the complexity of the Cypriot bordering landscape.

The year 2020 was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, which produced stringent restrictive measures invoking the emergency to contain the spread of the virus. Ever since, the Republic of Cyprus, like others in the Mediterranean, such as Italy, Malta and Greece, is openly using pushbacks, violating humanitarian and refugee law (UNHCR 2020a). Invoking the exceptional situation of the pandemic to implement repressive measures has normalised practices which had been contested. There has been an extension and routinisation of the widespread detention, denial of access to asylum, expulsion and pushbacks of asylum seekers which are unlawful.

The 'Cypriot states of exception' must be understood in the context of the peculiarities of the country's troubled history. Cyprus is a post-colonial state and society riddled with contradictions of troubled and violent past. Established as a consociational republic, a bicommunal state, which prohibiting amendment of certain articles of the constitution and imposing external 'guarantors' of the constitutional order (De Smith, 1964; Constantinou,

2008; Trimikliniotis and Bozkurt, 2012). The de facto division and unresolved 'Cyprus problem' penetrates every aspect of life.

The Cypriot migration regime is operating largely under the general rubric of 'the state of exception' which grant wide discretion to immigration authorities as executive prerogative, (mis)perceived as a manifestation of the sovereignty. When it comes to immigration and asylum, the EU legal order has by and large supplemented and modified rather than replaced the national legal order (Trimikliniotis, 2013, 2018).

2.1 Borderings and the institutions of a de facto partitioned regime(s) in the north and south

The 'Cypriots state of exception' (Trimikliniotis 2010, 2013, 2018; Constantinou 2008) is a function of the divisions of "a border society" (Panayiotou, 2012). The suspension of the legal 'norm' in the guise of emergency impacts negatively on human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable, such as refugees and migrants, as migration is becoming increasingly a polarising issue across the globe (Trimikliniotis, 2018; 2020; 2022). The situation in Cyprus must be placed within broader processes in Europe and the EU responses to recent crises which have been uneven and entailing the extraterritorial processing of refugee applications (Levy 2010; Nedoh 2022).

Questions relating to the outer borders of the EU are subject to a complex geopolitical logic of the establishment of default lines. Cyprus is an EU member with parts of its territory *not* under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus. This has produced a system for regulating free movement for workers (and other citizens) *within* and *access to* the territories of the European Union (Guild, 2009; Trimikliniotis 2009; 2013). There is a system of strict border controls based on visa applications and the operation of Schengen, promoted as the world's largest free visa area in the world, as well as a regime of combating irregular migration once inside the EU. It can hardly be considered as 'soft'; rather, it is a legal regime of crossing the EU external borders that can be read as clearly stating: "No Right to Entry" (Cholewinski, 2003). Over the last decade, the EU is increasingly introducing processes of "securitised admission criteria" in the Schengen Borders Code which have become the "centrepiece of integrated border management" which undermines the notion of free movement by instilling ambiguity (Moreno-Lax, 2017), particularly since the pandemic (Libe, 2020). A constant

European dilemma is between ‘hard borders’ versus ‘soft borders’ (DeBardeleben 2005, 11). The EU border regime is riddled with contradictions, mixed signals, ambiguity, and highly volatile situations reflecting the contestations within the EU over the issue as well as the uncertainty about the likely shape of EU’s future limits (Balibar, 2004; 2015; Moreno-Lax, V. 2017). In the context of the politicisation of immigration the question of the borders and immigration increasingly become the ‘centre’ in terms of political discourses at the EU level and within national politics (Lavah, 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2016, 2020a, 2022).

Cyprus as whole is “a border society” (Panayiotou, 2012) and the dividing ‘Green Line’ or buffer zone is at the centre. The ‘Green Line’ rightly depicted as a long divide separating the communities following “a post-colonial chaos, internecine fighting and hatred, civil war, invasion, population displacements and physical partition”; a subject anthropologists explore the various zones of the dead, the realms of memory and history (Papadakis, 2005). Others have sought to conceive it not only as war-born frontier that cuts across the country, but as “boundaries of cooperation” (Hocknell, 2001). However, the division line of Cyprus is a result of war that generates fear, suspicion, and enmity. The crucial issue in bordering processes is a matter of population control in a territory, where nationalism is hegemonic force as a means of “consolidation of the nation in social and political life” (Anastasiou, 2022).

For Cyprus, the question of population, the ethnic composition and settlement has been a highly contested issue, particularly since the 1974 de facto partition, but this was not related to populations other than Turkish citizens. The Greek-Cypriots accuse the Turkey of attempting to alter the demographic character of the island by bringing in migrants to settle from Turkey, but this is disputed by Turkish-Cypriots as an exaggeration (Hatay, 2017). The Cuco report of the Council of Europe Report, under rapporteur Cuco (1992a) criticising “the aim of the Turkish-Cypriot administration's policy regarding the Turkish migrants”, which “has been to encourage their permanent settlement on the island”.

Population has taken a new twist with the recent anti-immigrant politics. With the pandemic there is increasing frequency and intensity, Greek-Cypriot politicians, and government ministers repeat that “Turkey is pursuing the demographic alteration of Cyprus through the

instrumentalization of the migrant issue".[11] Using this discourse that in July 2022, new legislation was passed, which provides for hiring 300 special police officers to guard the Green Line from migrants in an irregular situation trying to gain access to territory.[12] NGOs and the UNHCR consider that there is a real risk that persons seeking asylum will be denied access to the asylum procedure and might be turned away under unmonitored conditions and through potentially unlawful means. In fact, UNHCR believes that the deployment of the armed police guards will lead to an increase of trafficking and smuggling, which is already taking place. The UN SG report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, further expressed concern over the deployment of an official law and order force to patrol the buffer zone in order to prevent migrants and asylum seekers from crossing to the south, adding that such patrolling would be considered a 'significant violation'.

Migration and asylum in Cyprus and the responses by the two sides creates peacekeeping challenges with implications for the resolution of the Cyprus problem. The UN had already begun to take up the migration issue, initially behind the scenes, and via UNHCR for some time now. But that was primarily perceived as a kind of 'management issue'. By 2022, the UN SC would treat migration as an "*island-wide matter*" amongst others such as health, crime, environmental protection, and issues related to the adverse impacts of climate change (UN, 2022). The SG Report of 2021 had noted "the growing issue of undetected crossings through the buffer zone by asylum seekers and irregular migrants" which is cited as "the reason for the enhancement of surveillance capacity along the ceasefire lines". Moreover, the UN chief noted that "the issue of irregular migration and, in particular, the irregular crossings of asylum seekers from north to south, continued to be a source of tension between the sides" (UN, 2021, para 42.). He referred to "several discussions on irregular migration" took place between experts during this period with United Nations facilitation. While it was agreed that efforts need to be made to sustain such a dialogue with a view to tackling this serious issue more effectively, bur noted "decisions on a proper vehicle for ongoing discussion remain pending". The UN chief noted his appreciation about "the challenging regional context as well as the high volume of arrivals in Cyprus in relation to the size of the population" but recalled

[11] Cyprus News Agency, "Turkey is pursuing the demographic alteration of Cyprus through the instrumentalization of the migrant issue, says Interior Minister", CNA, 11 December 2022.

[12] The police officers' tasks include the patrolling and surveillance of possible crossing points of 'illegal immigrants' through the Green Line; the screening of the migrants for the early detection of smugglers or terrorists; the transport, movement or escort of these migrants; and the deportation of irregular migrants.

"the critical importance of full adherence to international legal norms in the handling of asylum seekers and refugees, wherever they may be found" (UN, 2021, para 71). Crucial is the UN Secretary General explicit warning that, "several categories of violation resulted in exacerbating the perception of the buffer zone as a 'hard border'" noting that, "51 new prefabricated concrete firing positions deployed along the southern ceasefire line, bringing the total since 2019 to 290" (UN, 2021, para 14). In its July 2022 report, the UNFICYP mandated with monitoring activity within the buffer zone, recorded that an UNFICYP patrol within the buffer zone was shot at by suspected traffickers. The UN SG Report (UN, 2023) referred to another incident on 15 November where UNFICYP peacekeepers were fired upon by unidentified individuals inside the buffer zone and that there is evidence that illegal trafficking through the buffer zone increased in 2022 and that the movement of migrants between north and south of the island created tensions between the two sides which triggered unilateral reactions that did not address the problem but created new ones by altering the status quo of the buffer zone.

Borders are paradise for criminal profiteering and the Green Line is such a place. UNHCR reported that trafficking and smuggling already increased in 2022 following the placement of barbed wire along specific parts of the Green Line which were reportedly used by third country nationals in order to enter the Republic controlled areas, because smugglers increased their prices from a few hundred euros before the barbed wire was placed, to €2,000-€3,000. The effectiveness of the 11 km long barbed wire across the Green Line was the subject of discussion in Parliament in October 2022, as most opposition parties and representatives of local communities affected by the barbed wire challenged its usefulness, since arrivals doubled from 2021 to 2022 and arrivals of unaccompanied minors through the Green Line tripled. The UNFICYP report criticised the authorities for its encroachment into the buffer zone through the unauthorised construction of the fence and for repeatedly ignoring calls by the UN Security Council to remove it.

2.3 From the south to the north: Migration and asylum across the divide

With the pandemic measures another layer of 'state of exception' was added, processes observed a in many countries (AL Rob and Shields, 2022). On both sides of the divide, public health concerns have been utilized to justify border restrictions with tight border regimes

have had the impact of exacerbating vulnerabilities of migrant groups and amount to a weakening of refugee rights. Studies have focused on the measures taken by the authorities in the south, the RoC (Demetriou and Trimikliniotis 2022a; 2022b; Trimikliniotis, 2020c; Parsanoglou et al, 2022; Trimikliniotis and Tsianos 2022). However, little research has been conducted about northern Cyprus, the TRNC.

The TRNC is referred to as a 'de facto' or 'contested' state (De Waal, 2018). Implementing human rights regimes in unrecognised jurisdictions is through 'engagement without recognition' (Berg and Ker-Lindsay 2020; Berg and Pegg 2018) as is evident with respect to ECHR efforts to provide a local remedy. On the other hand, non-domestic asylum applications are not possible in northern Cyprus and there is only *indirect* engagement through the UNHCR. Much of the engagement is informal rendering migrant and refugee protection precarious (interview with UN officer). Engagement across the Green Line had been fairly limited until recently, as Cyprus was not considered a host country for refugees and asylum seekers from third countries (Yakinthou and Polili, 2010). Moreover, due to the Cyprus conflict, the 1951 Geneva Convention were not fully implemented. Even in the RoC, until 2002 the UNHCR was responsible for refugee status determination, until the RoC government assumed responsibility for asylum claim processing. This was the eve accession to the EU which resulted in the transposition of the EU acquis, but only in the RoC-controlled territories.

The UNHCR has been more engaged in inducing cooperation across the Green Line, especially since the influx of asylum seekers to both sides of the island following the war in Syria. In practice, the UNHCR works through local NGOs, which act on behalf of the UNHCR. The relations are informal. The regime in the north operates under the stringent rules subjected on all aliens, under rubric of the old Cypriot law, first established by the British Aliens and Immigration Law (Cap 105). The Turkish Cypriot authorities do not accept asylum applications, nor they have a legally binding system of international protection of refugees, despite promises to introduce such laws over the last decade. Whilst in the RoC there is some pressure to comply with "common standards" contained in the EU Return Directive, even though such standards are not always adequately complied with (Trimikliniotis, Demetriou, 2022), in the north the regime relies entirely on the colonial era laws that provides a category of 'prohibited immigrant', which implies indefinite detention and deportations.

There is a lack of cooperation between the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot sides on migration and asylum. The Turkish Cypriot proposal for the establishment of a Bicommunal Technical Committee to deal with such matters was rejected by the Greek-Cypriot side, concerned about recognition of the TRNC. With the pandemic, the overall situation has worsened. The war in Syria and the increase in arrivals, tensions had been growing across the Green Line over crossing to the south. This is partly due to the tourist visa system in place (restrictions are only applied to citizens of Armenia and Nigeria, and as of 2019, Syria). Palestinians and Iraqis, who comprise a large percentage of asylum seekers, do not require visas. The sudden visa restriction for Syrians in 2019 was designed to stem the numbers crossing the Green Line. Citizens of all other nationalities can arrive without visa and are granted visa exemption and tourist visas upon arrival. The visas for Syrians were an unexpected development that occurred without consultation with UNHCR or civil society organizations. Meanwhile, the numerous universities in northern Cyprus also attract mixed migration. At present there are approximately 30 universities with 120,000 students enrolled, in a territory where the census figures establish a total population of 300,000. Alongside an exploitative shadow market for labour there are criminal syndicates and social problems with a high incidence of suicide (Kahvecioğlu 2022).

With the absence of a law regulating asylum applications, individuals whose visas expire are subject to deportation. CSOs write letter to the UNHCR seeking protection on behalf of the asylum seekers. Increasing numbers of asylum seekers and limited cooperation across the Green Line for transit to reception centres, means that asylum seekers are now afforded shelter in various northern Cyprus dormitories, whereby food and material assistance in provided.

The pandemic worked in tandem with the RoC's pushbacks. The period witnessed the unilateral closing of crossings, which affected asylum seekers wishing to cross the Green Line. Numerous asylum-seekers were trapped in the buffer zone, including a Kurd from Turkey who is trapped during the writing report. Contrary to the hostile treatment by authorities on both sides, Turkish-Cypriot CSOs in the north, like their counterparts in the south, have demonstrate resilience and solidarity in supporting asylum seekers. But the T/C authorities in the north have little sympathy towards migrants: useful as cheap labour, but disposable.

The pandemic was a catalyst for migration and asylum key issues in the political debates, increasingly connected to security, the management of crossings and the solution to the Cyprus problem.

3. The pandemic regimes of exception and policy frames

3.1 Closure of the checkpoints along the ceasefire line

The government's first reaction to Covid-19 was the announcement on 28 February 2020 of the following set of measures:

- General cautions to the public to avoid crowded spaces and self-isolate if possible.
- Announcements about possible future measures to be adopted if necessary.
- The closure of four checkpoints along the ceasefire line separating south (the Republic of Cyprus) from north (the Turkish occupied "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus"),[13] which had never been shut since 2003, when they were opened by the Turkish army.

Given the absence of any other substantial measures at the time, the closure of the checkpoints generated a negative reaction from peace activists in both communities,[14] from the main opposition party and from the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus,[15] all of whom urged the government to choose collaboration with the Turkish Cypriot community over unilateral actions to jointly face the challenge without undermining trust between the two communities. NGOs and the main opposition party argued that there was no scientific premise for the closure of the checkpoints, since at the time there were no Covid-19 incidents in the north and particularly given the fact that the external borders of the country remained open, without any checks or health screens being carried out on visitors at the airports. A spontaneous protest was held at one of the sealed checkpoints on the day following the announcement during which the demonstrators clashed with police who tried to block their way through the checkpoint, leading to an arrest and to other protesters being charged with

[13] Council of Ministers, Series of measures decided by the Ministerial Council for addressing the coronavirus epidemic (*Σειρά μέτρων αποφάσισε το Υπουργικό* Συμβούλιο *για αντιμετώπιση της επιδημίας του κορωνοϊού*), (28 February 2020).
[14] Physician's Weekly, 'Cyprus to shut checkpoints for first time since 2003 over coronavirus' (28 February 2020).
[15] UNFICYP, 'Statement on closure of crossing points along the buffer zone' (5 March 2020).

rioting. Protests continued in the days which followed with the police spraying Turkish Cypriot protesters with teargas in the buffer zone for the first time.

3.2 Postcolonial state of exceptions and the pandemic

Given that no state of emergency was declared, as provided by the constitution, the authorities in both sides of division instead relied on the Quarantine Law, which empowers the government to issue decrees to deal with the emergency. The government used an old colonial statute to restrict fundamental rights protected by the Constitution and international human rights instruments, often in disregard of the requirement that restrictions to rights must be reasonable and proportionate (Trimikliniotis, 2018; Mitas, 2017)

3.3 Free movement, Migration and Asylum

The pandemic years 2020 and 2021 were marked by significant migration and asylum policy reforms towards more restrictive and repressive regimes. Many of these have remained in force in 2022 or have left a lasting effect as a precedent. Some of the reforms were debated and others had even been announced in the pre-pandemic period but were only implemented following the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, within the general climate of emergency and exception that emerged. The continuing division of the country for almost half a century, giving rise to claims for a situation of emergency, coupled with the fact that it shapes migration routes and flows, have further embedded the pandemic sense of emergency into politics. Migration and asylum issues became more entangled with the 'Cyprus problem. With the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, the situation of third country nationals in general, and asylum seekers in particular, changed suddenly and drastically for the worst. The number of asylum applications were halved, as pandemic restrictions made travelling harder, but primarily because the Republic of Cyprus refused to accept applications for three months. In 2021, as restrictions started to ease, the numbers went up almost to the levels of 2019 and reached unprecedent levels in 2022, even though more restrictions were placed at entry points. Migrants and refugees from Africa and the Middle East, and more recently from Afghanistan, enter the country mostly through unguarded points of the buffer zone whilst smaller numbers enter via the sea.

With the outbreak of the pandemic, the RoC Government introduced harsh measures to contain migration flows.

3.4 Pushbacks and measures to curb 'irregular migration'

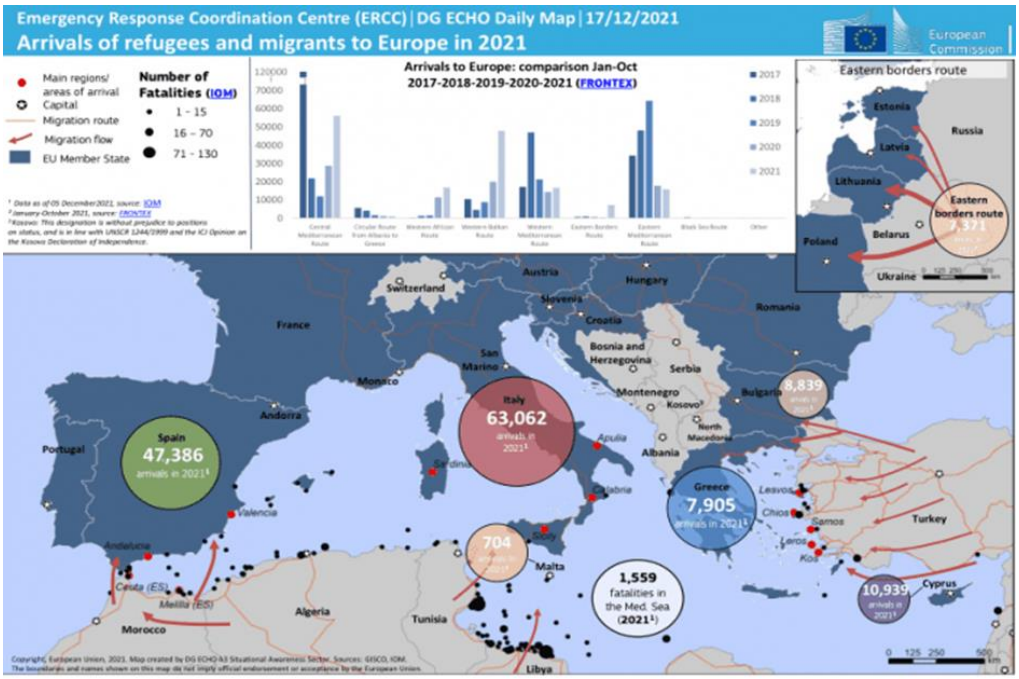
Of all the measures introduced in 2020, the pushbacks at sea attracted most international attention and criticism. The first known pushback took place on 20 March 2020, when the Greek Cypriot sea patrol prevented a boat with approximately 175 Syrians, including 30 women and 69 children, from reaching the shores of the Republic of Cyprus.[16] Pushbacks at sea continued after all pandemic related measures were lifted, many performed under an agreement with Lebanon which is of questionable legality.[17] In September 2020 there was an intensification of pushbacks to Lebanon, where the Greek Cypriot marine police officers used force against the persons on board the vessels and / or deliberately abandoned them without fuel or food.[18] This is a serious violation of international law, as there is state duty to provide assistance under the Law of the Sea,[19] to provide access to the asylum and international protection and generally abide by the no-refoulement principle. Additionally, there were several instances of pushbacks at land as prospective asylum seekers were repeatedly forced back into the buffer zone or were not allowed through the designated checkpoints along the Green Line. In the summer of 2021, one such pushback at land received international publicity and was also discussed in parliament, as three Cameroonian nationals were denied entry through the checkpoint and denied the right to file for asylum, remaining in a tent within the buffer zone for several months.[20]

4. Irregular arrivals and asylum during the pandemic: The data analysed

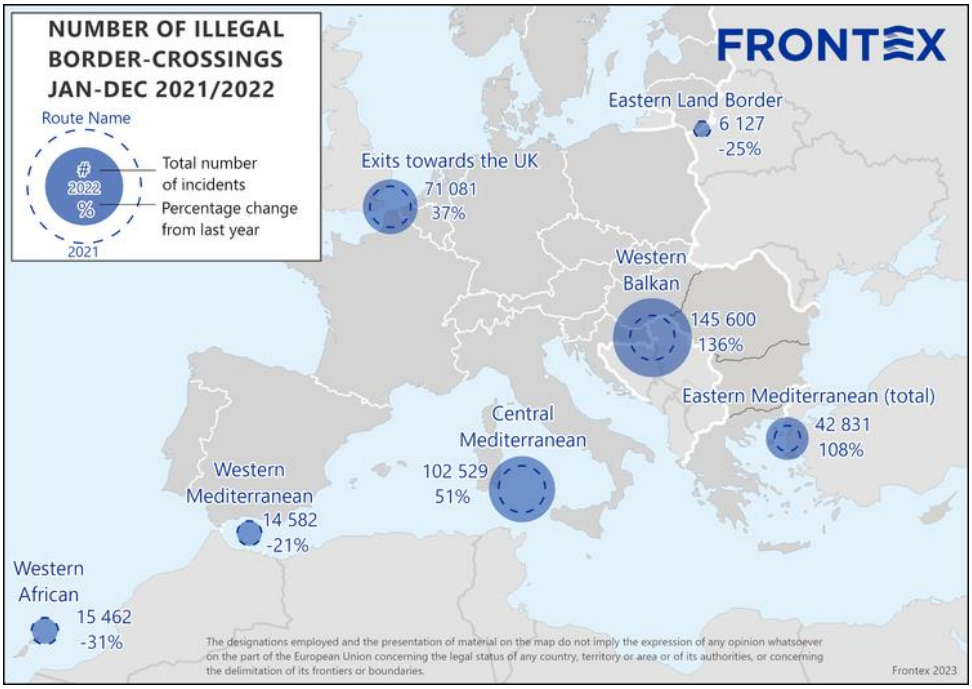
Migration and asylum are a major global issue. In 2022, the total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee their homes was 100 million (UN, 2022). The number of refugees in

[16] Euromed (2020), 'Syrian Refugees in Cyprus pushed back to Turkey', 19 May 2020.
[17] Euromed (2022), 'Cyprus: Refoulements to Lebanon and Syria under scrutiny again', 4 May 2022.
[18] Human Rights Watch (2020), 'Cyprus: Asylum Seekers Summarily Returned- Pushbacks against Surge of Arrivals by Boat From Lebanon', 29 September 2020.
[19] Article 98 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides for a state "Duty to render assistance".
[20] Winfield and Hadjicostis (2021), 'Europe's migrant crisis dominates Pope's Cyprus-Greece trip', *Crux,* 2 December 2021.

Europe more than doubled in 2022 and the number who were internally displaced rose to almost 9 million (UNHCR, 2022), a large since the years of the refugee crisis in Europe 2015-16 (Trimikliniotis 2022). Map 3 below illustrates arrivals of refugees and migrants in different European countries during 2021.



Map 3 *Arrivals of refugees and migrants in Europe 2021*



Map 4 *Frontex EU's external borders in 2022: Number of irregular border crossings highest since 2016*

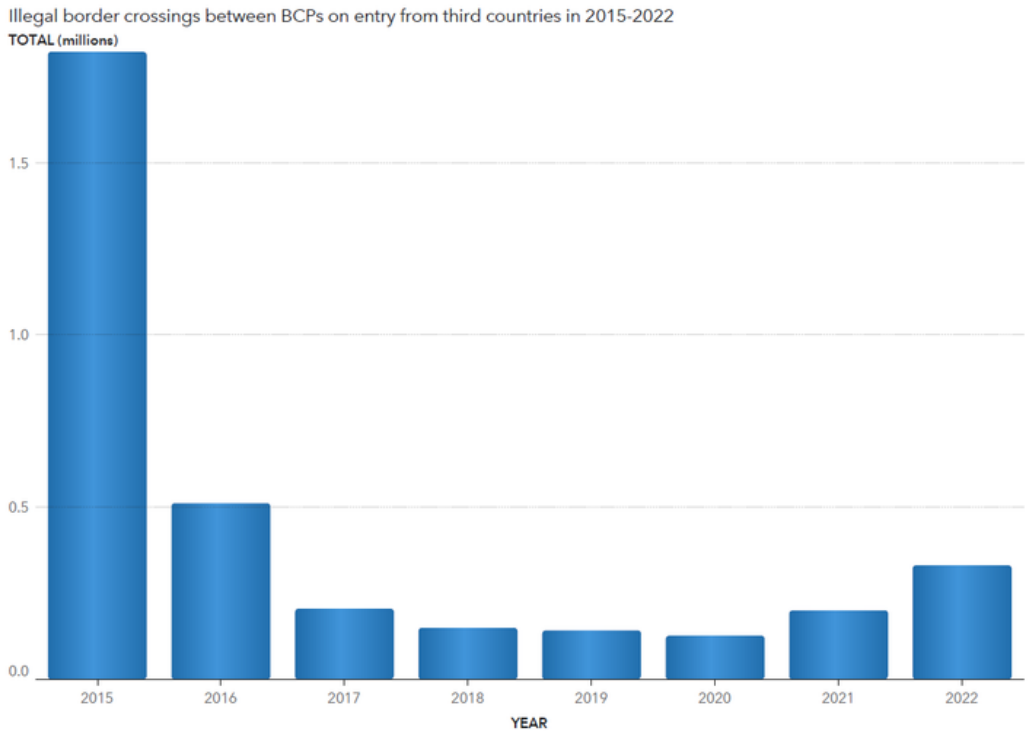


Table 1 *Irregular crossings since 2015 according to Frontex*.

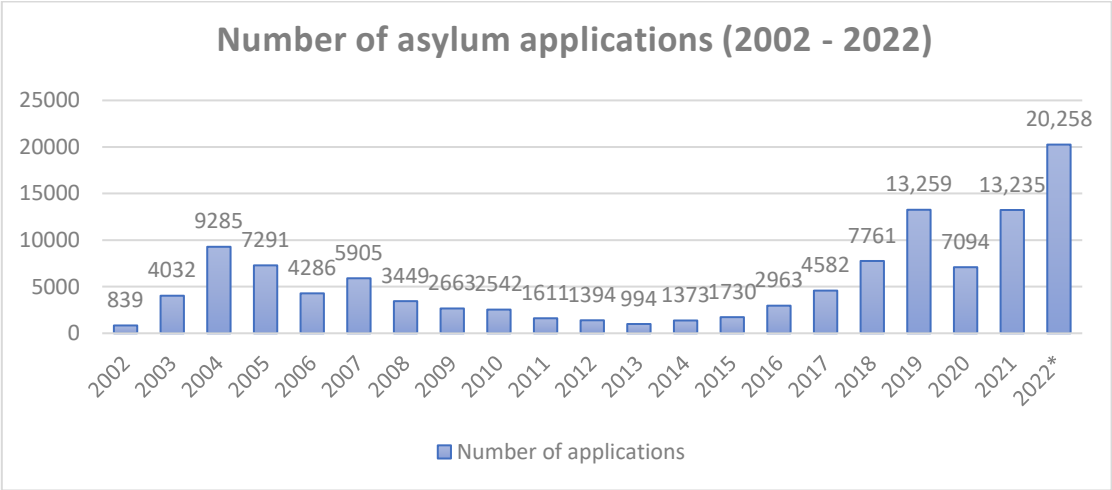
Route	January-December 2022	December 2022	Jan-Dec 2021/Jan-Dec 2022	Top nationalities
Western Balkans	145 600	8 944	+136%	Syria, Afghanistan, Türkiye, Tunisia
Central Mediterranean	102 529	7 760	+51%	Egypt, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Syria
Eastern Mediterranean	42 831	1898	+108%	Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Congo (Kinshasa)
Western Mediterranean	14 582	784	-21%	Algeria, Morocco, Syria
Western African	15 462	468	-31%	Morocco, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast
Exits towards the UK	71 081	2 875	+37%	Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania

Table 2 *Top countries of origin in different routes of irregular arrivals, Frontex*

According to preliminary figures of Frontex, that in 2022, around 330 000 irregular border crossings were detected at EU's external border (FRONTEX 2023). This is the highest number since 2016 and an increase of 64% from the previous year. we had the higher number of

irregular border crossings since 2016 in EU's external borders, but the numbers are but a fraction of that of 2015 (see Map 3 and Map 4 and Frontex Table 2 above). As for the Eastern Mediterranean in 2022, there were about 42 800 irregular border crossings detected on the Eastern Mediterranean route (Table 2). Syrians, Afghans and Nigerians were the top reported nationalities. Figures roughly doubled compared with 2022 yet remained below half of the figures in 2019.

During the height of the 2015 'refugee crisis' Cyprus did not witness a significant rise in the number of applications: 1,373 cases of asylum applications for 2014; 1,730 in 2015; and 2,936 in 2016 (Table 1, Trimikliniotis, 2020a). However, between 2016 and 2019, there was a sharp rise in the number of asylum applications, from 2,936 applications in 2016 to 13,200 in 2019, which was the highest number ever recorded. In 2020 the number was halved to 7,094 applications. In 2021 the numbers increased to the levels of 2019 and in 2022 it reached the highest ever point exceeding 20,000. This must be placed in the broader context of arrivals in Europe, as shown in Maps 3 and 4 and Table 1 above.



[**Table 3** *Ministry of Interior of RoC. The 2022 figures refer to applications up to November 2022*]

The numbers actual irregular arrivals recorded during the pandemic years must be examined in comparison to the previous period. As we can see from Table 4, there is a correlation between arrivals and asylum applications. Prior to 2017 the patterns were different because the Government created the Pournara registration which made all irregular migrants to register there: Experts told us that once migrants discovered that asylum-seekers were to be

released and all others were to be deported, this had an immediate effect that increased asylum applications. Since 2017 arrivals make on average about 80% applications for asylum. This is a rough estimate, as we do not know for certain if it is the same persons who arrive who apply for asylum, but we can safely assume that this remains largely the pattern.

Year	**Number of persons arriving irregularly***	**Applications for Asylum****	**Ratio of arrivals and asylum application*****
2015	4,263	1,730	2.46
2016	3,497	2,963	1.18
2017	4,118	4,582	0.90
2018	6,108	7,761	0.79
2019	8,954	13,259	0.68
2020	5,466	7,094	0.77
2021	10,918	13,235	0.82
2022	17,124	20,258	0.85

*[**Table 4** *Police figures. ** Figures provided by the Asylum Service. According to the Police 95% arrive from the buffer zone. ***Our calculations.].*

During 2020, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) offered financial support €4.5m, to Cyprus to speed up the asylum process and provided for 80 experts. However, the numbers of pending applications have increased.

The government claims that 90-95% of asylum seekers enter through the Green Line after having crossed Turkey. Also, many applications come from persons who enter the Republic as students, visitors or workers. The direct sea trip to Cyprus, often via unseaworthy boats, is risky, and many have lost their lives en route. The term 'mixed migration' is increasingly used to describe the newly arrived economic migrants and persons eligible for international protection. This purposely or inadvertently blurs the picture of protection that must be afforded to those who ask for it, and often produces negative perceptions amongst the host population.[21]

In 2021, there was an increase in the numbers of asylum applications, in comparison to previous years, but the reasons for this rise are more complicated than the conspiratorial

[21]For instance, mixed migration is defined as the 'cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution' and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities.

versions of a 'hybrid war' waged by Turkey, cited by politicians and journalists. There is some validity to the argument that the EU restrictions on the number of asylum-seekers reaching EU shores, particularly in the way it was achieved, may well have some disproportionate impact by burdening EU border countries, such as Cyprus. However, this fails to explain why Cyprus is chosen as the route in comparison to other destinations closer and more accessible to continental Europe, where there are better prospects for a new secure life and work. Asylum seekers may choose Cyprus as a destination due to rising tensions, wars and repressive measures by regimes in the Middle East and Africa, or for other reasons. The country's asylum and immigrant labour systems are in serious need of reform, together with a necessary broader reform of the Dublin system (Trimikliniotis, 2020a). This explains why despite the tough anti-immigration rhetoric, policies and barriers in the form of aversion measures on land and at sea (including illegal pushbacks) and the generation of a hostile environment, has not dented increasing numbers of people from seeking refuge in Cyprus. In the absence of policies and mechanisms to address labour trafficking, economic migrants also turn to the asylum system as a means to escape modern slavery. And in the absence of policies of legalisation of overstayers, inevitably some overstayers will also resort to the asylum system as a means to extend their stay.

In 2020, the patterns of the countries of origin have not changed dramatically since 2019. Figures from the Asylum Service, **Table 5 and 6**:

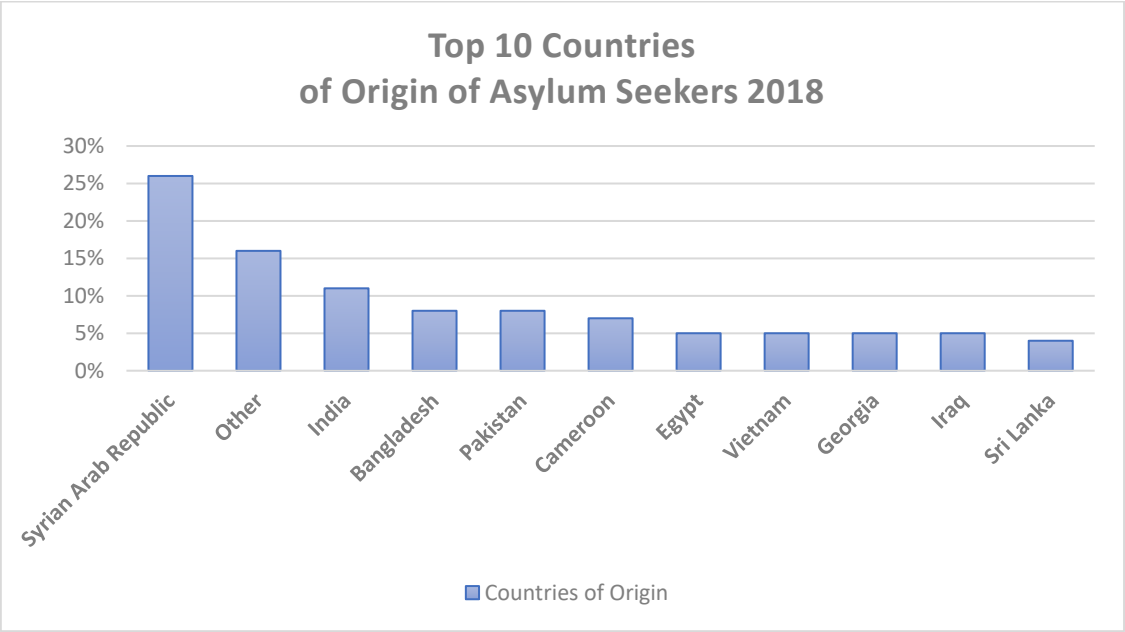


Table 5

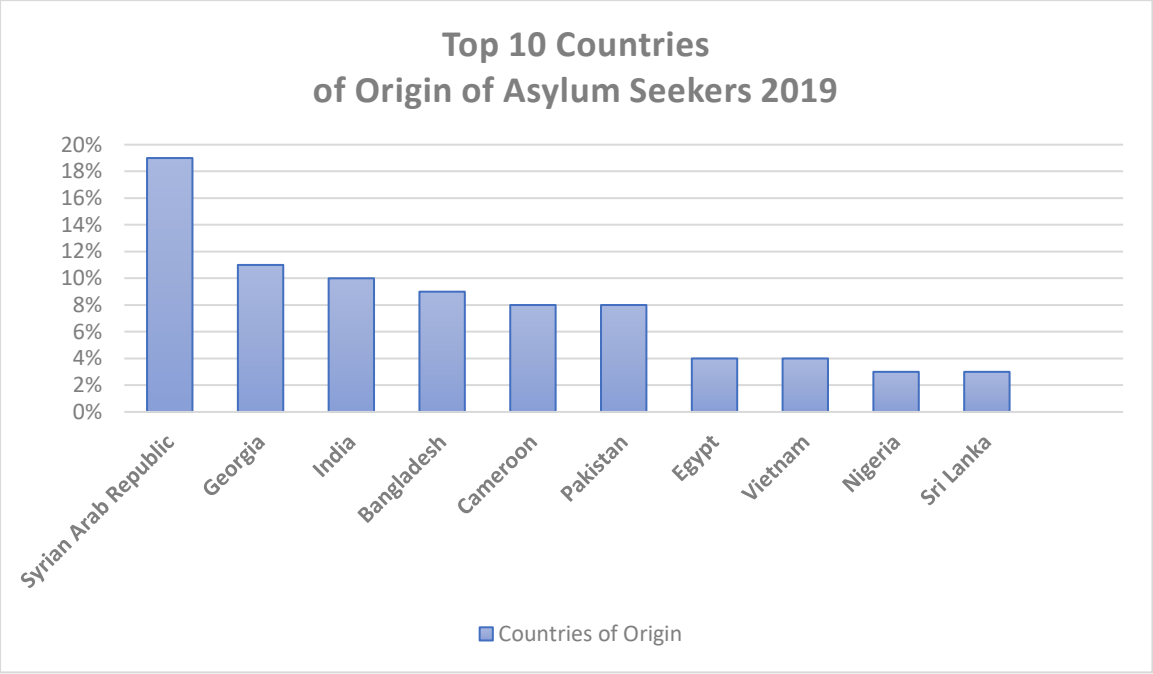


Table 6

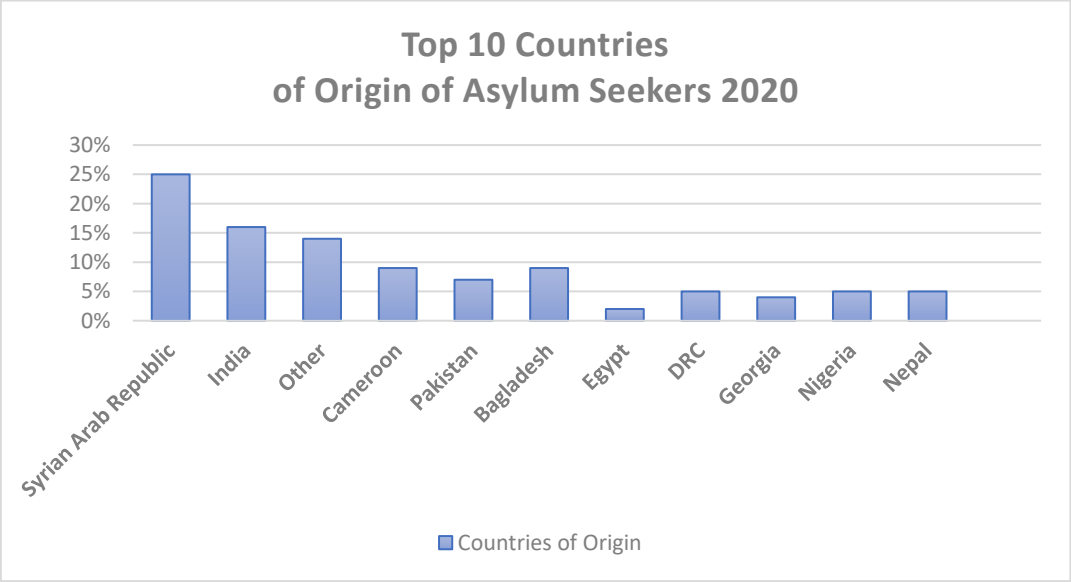


Table 7

In 2020, the situation of third-country nationals and asylum seekers changed suddenly and drastically with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic: the number of asylum applications was halved, as the pandemic restrictions made travelling harder . The Republic

of Cyprus refused to accept applications for three months. Also, reception conditions seriously deteriorated.

In 2021, the numbers went up to the level of 2019, as shown in the Table 8 below:[22]

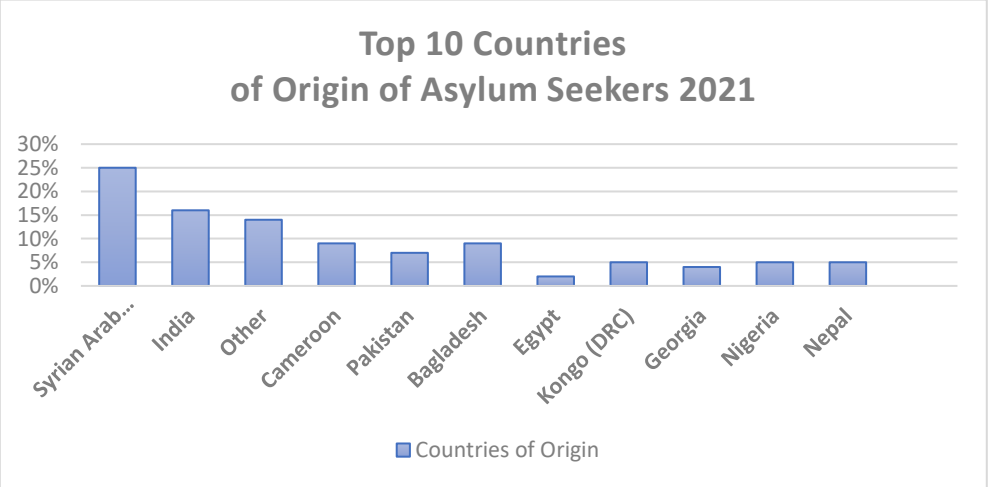


Table 8

In 2022 the top 10 countries were the following:

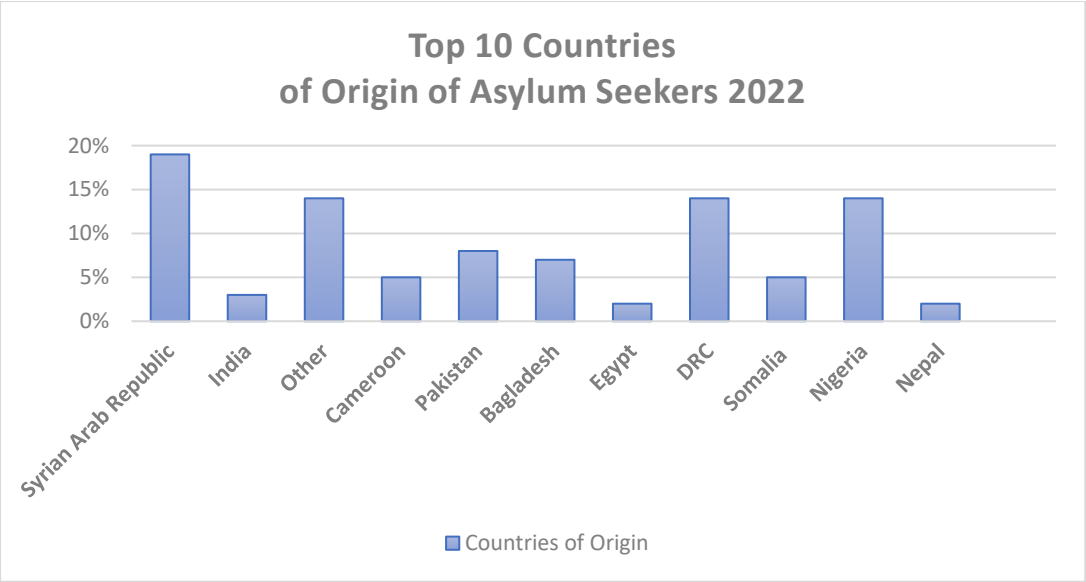


Table 9

Apart from the rise in arrivals and applications for asylum, one can observe the apparent change in the patterns of the country of origin of arrivals. However, this is blurred as the

[22] Based on the official figures provided by the Asylum Service of the Republic of Cyprus. The Asylum Service, the department of the Ministry of Interior responsible for asylum-related statistical collection in Cyprus. The statistics have been provided by the Asylum Service, see AIDA (2022, 7).

figures provided conflate the figures of applications for asylum with irregular arrivals. Nonetheless, there is a correlation between the patterns of arrivals and asylum applications.

Prior the pandemic, in 2019 the top three countries of origin of asylum applicants came from Syria, Georgia and India. However, since the pandemic, save for which Syria tops in asylum applications, it is now Nigeria and DRC which are second with 14% each, with a significant reduction in the percentages from India, whilst Georgia and Sri Lanka (which are the countries of origin mostly of domestic workers) disappearing from the top ten. There is a strong African presence, if we also include Cameroon and Somalia (the origin of many unaccompanied minors in Cyprus). Overall, there is a reduction in asylum applications from migrant workers who have come directly to the Republic of Cyprus on work visa, particularly domestic workers (Sri Lanka, Georgia, India). Despite the government rhetoric about cracking the abuse of the asylum system by TCN on student visas, the number of asylum application from TCN who arrive directly to the RoC on student visas has been reduced.

The RoC Minister of Interior referred to "the influx of irregular migratory flows to Europe" that "is increasing at an alarming rate" and recognised that "while the food crisis, climate change and, unfortunately, the war in Ukraine have created new migratory waves". [23] The Minister claimed that Cyprus and Greece, are "confronted with the constant provocativeness of Turkey, which systematically aids, promotes and instrumentalizes irregular migratory flows to the free areas, to a percentage that has reached more than 90% of total arrivals". In his public interventions which have become increasingly alarming he refers to a "triple burden or threat": the "demographic threat" to villages which is metonym for "ethnoracial threat"; "excessive amounts of money on immigration" and "security problems" (Staikos, 2022). The changing patterns of those arriving irregularly are cited by the Minister as proof of instrumentalization of migrants by Turkey and criminal networks in operation.

This narrative is based on a problematic perception that we are dealing with law-and-order matter. Migration management is one based on a 'hydraulic' model of keeping the irregular migrant out. In the interviews with migrants and asylum-seekers the story of their arrival

[23]Intervention of the Minister of Interior Mr. Nikos Nouris at the Press Conference on the organisation of the MED5 Ministerial Meeting in Cyprus on asylum and migration issues, "Παρέμβαση Υπουργού Εσωτερικών κ. Νίκου Νουρή στη Συνέντευξη Τύπου με θέμα τη διοργάνωση της Υπουργικής Συνόδου MED5 στην Κύπρο, για θέματα ασύλου και μετανάστευσης", Public Information Office, 23 September 2022.

provides for a nuanced explanation which tallies with the FRONTEX figures which deal with the whole of the EU and Table 2 in particular:

- The anti-immigrant rhetoric is based on the false assumption that Africa is "a continent of massive exodus". There is a rise of African migration to Europe, however this is due to the intensification of conflicts, environmental problems and hardship that has resulted from economic crises, the pandemic and knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine and other wars.
- For Cyprus, the policies of regional and neighbouring countries in the Middle East and in Africa affect arrival flows in Cyprus. The closure of other routes to the EU and visa policies affects this. Many African countries do not require visa to Türkiye. Also, student visas in one of the numerous universities in the north make access easy. The three African countries in the top ten of Cyprus arrivals all have serious problems: DRC and Cameroon have wars and in Nigeria, apart from regional conflicts and a state that does not protect its citizens, there are major trafficking problems.
- The de facto division of Cyprus generates attractive migration routes via the unrecognised TRNC. The economic hardship caused by the collapse of the Turkish Lira has made it more attractive for universities, many of questionable quality, to attract students, even if they are intending to cross to the south for asylum. Networks operate as there are good profits to be made.
- The authorities in the north could have done more to deter the numbers but have chosen not to do so because they have little incentive. They are not happy with being branded as 'a puppet state' and as an instrument of Ankara. Asylum-seekers interviewed told us of cases, where, upon arrival at the airport, the authorities expelled persons of student visa who did not know the course they would follow at the university they were registered.

5. Media analysis findings

Our analysis across the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot press over three different periods of the pandemic (early, middle, late) and three different themes (Bordering and Green Line Mobility; Bordering and Migrant Mobility; Bordering and Covid Governance) provided a

comprehensive insight into mainstream media's textual and visual narrations of the pandemic. Interestingly, and when it comes to the rights and restrictions in the context of the pandemic, we have recorded more commonalities across the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot media than differences. The most important finding of our discourse analysis and visual analysis is that Cypriot mainstream press in both sides repeatedly, but not without exceptions, consented to securitisation policies and nationalist ideological frameworks that informed official policies in their "own" side (e.g., Turkish Cypriot media expressed consent to Turkish Cypriot authority policies and similarly Greek Cypriot media in the Republic of Cyprus). While such consent and its fractures along partisan lines might not be fully surprising finding in the Cypriot political context, in the context of the pandemic it was expressed in three distinct ways:

- **Consent towards the strictest government measures of mobility suspension – as expressed in curfews, lockdowns and intensive health checks – was almost universal in the media at both sides of the divide**. This was most apparent during the early period of the pandemic though this continued throughout, with the exceptions of highly politicised moments. The health emergency and the imperative need to "take measures to tackle the virus" (Dialogos, 28/02/20) and "cater for citizens' health" (Simerini, 08/03/20) dominated coverage of Covid-19 and curfews and lockdowns were hardly ever questioned. The consent was destabilised momentarily and in two cases, when left-wing and occasionally the liberal press questioned suspension of human rights, especially in relation (i.) to protest (against checkpoint closures and 'Os Dame' movement and police violence) and (ii.) the extremity of migrant mobility restrictions.

- **Migration was primarily discussed in both sides of the divide as a problem, with reporting in the media precariously balancing between narratives of securitisation (most prominently) and humanitarianism (occasionally).** The converged imaginary of migration as a problem dominated, albeit this convergence was asymmetrical and contradictory at times. This convergence was primarily linguistic and visual. Linguistically, repeatedly and regularly migrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) were referred to as threats to security and named as *illegal migrants* (for example the word λαθρομετανάστης – illegal migrant is mentioned 7 times in a 700-word article in Simerini (Simerini 18/09/20). Liberal press, such as Phileleftheros, precariously balanced between

some stories recognising migrant suffering and suspension of rights and narratives of "illegal migration" and security threats, while left-wing press was the most consistent in avoiding discriminatory language. The language of "illegal migrants" was also used in the Turkish Cypriot press though overall reporting was not hostile, but lack of hostility towards migrants was almost in all cases combined with hostility towards the Anastasiades government and its use of migrants to discriminate Turkish Cypriots, including through their mobility restrictions. Kibris Gazetesi (16 March 2021) writes in relation to the Republic of Cyprus' migration policies: "Greece continues to commit human rights crimes. However, is it only a coincidence that G/C administration is taking Greece by example?". While we saw such references to human rights, also all Turkish Cypriot media used the concept of "illegal migrant" regularly. Visually, we repeatedly observed lack of care on how migrants are represented with questions being raised about violation of media ethical codes as migrants' privacy, consent and individuality were often not protected (in images where their faces are shown while discussing criminal accusations but not convictions, where they are seen only as masses or dark figures with little individuality). Summing up, visual and discursive constructions of migration as a primarily security problem were not divided across ideological or ethnic lines, but rather the occasional merging of narratives of security and care mark media's contradictory discourses on migration. In different ways but repeatedly, both sides of the press discussed migration as an issue that needs to be subjected to other political priorities (or borders, national sovereignty and interethnic relations).

- **Consent broke down when it came to Green Line mobility and the closures of the checkpoints by the Republic of Cyprus in the name of public health protection. The theme of Bordering and Green Line mobility affirmed a deeply divided across ideological lines mediasphere. Partisan reporting, especially emphasising securitization was particularly prominent in Greek Cypriot right-leaning press, which repeatedly justify suspension of citizen rights in the name of national security rather than for health-related issues. Liberal and left-wing press narratives were much more cautious and occasionally hostile to suspension of Green Line crossings.** Interestingly, in both sides, when it comes to Green Line mobility, or its suspension, much of the media discourse swiftly shifted away from health concerns, turning back to the always prominent theme

for most mainstream media: the Cyprus problem. Simerini (05/03/20) announced the news that “Anastasiades closed some crossings in order to contain COVID”s risks”, but swiftly moved to the opinion that “EVERYTHING should close”. The article then focussed directly on the Cyprus problem and the opposition of the newspaper towards both the “pseudo state” and AKEL: “the opening of crossings CEMENTS the Turkish occupation and established the occupying pseudostate” and “AKEL criticises the government for leading Cyprus to partition and not aiming for a solution”. In another news story, a single reference is made to “COVID” (Simerini, 08/03/20), and the focus remains on *territorial* “border control”, the “absence of military presence [that] promotes partition” and the fact that “military presence of the National Guard across the Green Line […] crystalises the illegal Turkish invasion and occupation”. All in all, the narrative of right-wing press oscillates between the precarious balance of health and security, as well as between care and nationalism. Left-wing press sustained its critical response to the closures throughout the crisis, with Dialogos criticising the government for using security and health measures as an excuse to racialise the border and turning migrants into scapegoats that need to be contained (Dialogos 15/01/21). Liberal media, such as Philelefteros avoided to clearly politicise the matter in relation to the Cyprus problem but justified the decision as for example in its article on the 09/06/20 notes: “restricted mobility measures to contain the virus.

Image published in Simerini (08/03/20) on Green Line protests, where protesters are falsely identified as migrants, though at least some of the protesters have been identified by our team as known Turkish Cypriot individuals.

Image published in Phileleftheros (21/03/20) on the arrival of a boat with migrants in the territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriot authorities; it is not clear is this is stock photograph or photograph in location.

Image in Dialogos under the title “Large anti-racist protest” (31/05/20)

Image in Dialogos (15/01/21) contrasting the Minister of the Interior, Nicos Nouris' face with a faceless family of refugees, possibly denied settlement in Chloraka.

Image published in Kibris Gazetest in March 2020 and during the Green Line protests and the Republic's pushback of protesters.

Image of migrants arrested in the North published in Haber Kibris on 09/04/21 for trying to “illegally” cross from the North to the South, with their faces identifiable.

Image on refugee confinement in the Republic of Cyprus published in 12/01/21 published in Havadis Kibris. The image appears in different Turkish Cypriot newspapers during the period of analysis.

6. Readings from the field: local knowledge that reasons

6.1 Postcolonial instruments and pandemic re-bordering processes

The focus groups and interviews with activists stressed how abrupt, painful, and arbitrary the closing of the checkpoints began with the Ledra Street checkpoint. They saw the closure of the checkpoints as politically motivated and underlined how that checkpoint is of symbolic significance given the struggles to open it as a signalling the potential reunification. They underlined the paradox that the Ledra checkpoint was *unilaterally* closed by the Greek-Cypriot side at a time when the airports were still open and in the absence of even a single recorded Covid case in the northern part of the country.

6.2 Border Hardening Processes in the Wake of the Pandemic

Most of our expert interviewees identified the unilateral closing of the checkpoints by the RoC as a key event that triggered a series of border hardening processes on both sides of the buffer zone. The authorities on both sides essentially became "locked in" an action-reaction dynamic. Several experts repeatedly highlighted the legacy of such decisions, noting that various of the border control measures adopted during the pandemic were still being implemented. The relentless ID checks on both sides, as well as the implementation of higher insurance charges, introduced massive delays at the checkpoints, especially for those crossing with cars. Several interviewees interpreted the closing of the checkpoints as a form of discrimination against T/Cs.

Experts agreed that the de facto partition generates contradictions as the TRNC is an unrecognised state established and developed 'in the shadow' of Turkey and diachronically scorned and 'belittled' by the internationally recognised RoC, who had brand it as an illegal and rogue state.

6.3 Barbed wire at Astromeritis: Symbolic act of hardening of 'borders'

The activists criticised what they saw as an attempt to prevent inter-communal contacts during the pandemic and consider that installing barbed wire and gated fences along the Astromeritis buffer zone is a symbolic act that cents partition. Most local farmers interviewed

at Astromeritis stressed how ineffective it is as a preventative measure for irregular migration crossings and how impractical it is for them to conduct their daily business.

6.4 Pushbacks at Sea and at Land

In our interviews with experts and asylum seekers stressed the illegality, the violence and lasting effect of pushbacks. Asylum seekers who have experienced pushbacks at sea and at land describe the harshness of the violence and how their dignity is taken away by such brutal acts: the intimate realities of pushbacks, which very often entail a dimension of violence, whether verbal or physical. One refugee, upon attempting to enter the territory under the control of the of the Republic by land, was verbally attacked by Police officers at the checkpoint who told to go back to the other side. The case of a Syrian family coming to the RoC via sea is even more horrifying. Upon being intercepted by the RoC authorities at sea, the boat's engine broke and the boat started to sink. The authorities then severed the pregnant wife from her husband and two children. She was taken to Cyprus, while the rest of her family was pushed back to Lebanon. Apparently, after being severed from his wife, the husband had jumped into the sea in a desperate attempt to find her, but he was intercepted by the RoC authorities, tied up and forced onto the ship headed for Lebanon.

6.5 Contradictions/disagreements about hard-line immigration policy and the lack of cooperation

Experts interviewed reported a tension developing at the G/C official levels of the RoC concerning current and future border policy. Interviews with G/C officials and experts reveal that there is disagreement: On the one hand, the 'conservative wing' pushes for harder 'borders' in the guise of 'control of irregular migration'. The installing of barbed wire and the new policy of recruiting 300 new police officers to guard the Green Line is guided by this approach. On the other hand, there are those diplomats and policymakers, who consider such policies as dangerous that may to permanent partition and problematic, and thus favour a returning to the pre-pandemic norms.

The T/C experts and officials expressed disappointment. They dispute the official G/C rhetoric about a deliberate policy on the part of Ankara. However, many consider that a great deal more could be done if there is political will and cooperation between the two sides.

6.6 Encampment, desperation, unacceptable conditions: a sense of 'no escape'

Migrants interviewed spoke about how Pournara in various degrees of negative descriptions. One described it as "unfit for human habitation", preferring homelessness and starvation rather than living there. Others spoke of being trapped. An African asylum-seeker said that they left their home in desperation and fear but found a hostile Europe in Cyprus. Some said there you are treated differently according to colour and ethnic origin; the food was not eatable. A few said they were treated fairly but food and conditions were bad. Others said that they just wanted to get out to find work and continue their lives.

6.7 The ambiguous legacy of digitality and new socialities

There was a sense of ambiguity about the usage during the pandemic, its legacy and potential for the post-pandemic period. Yet, they recognised its potential.

Migrants interviewed took a practical-functional approach about the digital devices and social network. They saw these are a useful tool, in the same way that the telephone and say this as network device that allows them to operate. The use of WhatsApp they found a particularly useful, e.g., the striking workers at the digital platform Wolt in December 2022.

Some activists interviewed spoke how various devices as a great potential, particularly the younger activists. Others, however, spoke about the sense of alienation in the use of these devices; they are a poor substitute for real physical contact and encounter. All were grateful that they could at least communicate and get information during the lockdown that allowed them to carry on and endure the difficult times. Some however, particularly the older, had misgivings about how the accentuated use of social media and platforms in demobilising, alienation, 'privatising' people who become more fearful, distant, and detached. They expressed concern about the distorting effects of social media via the spread of fake news, citing anti-vaxx propaganda and racist misinformation. Some even spoke of the dangers and the practices of government surveillance.

The younger activists interviewed were more positive about the potential of both social media and use of digital devices and platforms. For the younger ones, these devices and social network platforms are part of their daily lives and routines anyway. They saw digitalities as 'facts of life'.

Some activist stressed the importance of social media that allowed them to connect and organise. Antiracist activists interviewed were amazed that during the pandemic they connected with people from so many different backgrounds. They said that they found "a common purpose" and managed to bring together different perspectives, ideas, and resources. Some older activists expressed relief and satisfaction that via social media they connected with youngsters who have just finished their studies. Some younger activists were drawn activism contra to their conservative parents: they said that decided to act to do something about mass poverty, hunger, and homelessness of migrants which they view as *their* problem. Another activist interviewed called it "a revolt of the young" who act in the face of the humanitarian crisis and in defiance against extreme policies and racist rhetoric.

7. Rethinking the Cypriot states of exceptions, bordering and solidarities

There is no recognised 'border' in Cyprus, but a ceasefire line, a zone with its own life. In some contexts, and times, it is fluid, penetrable and dynamic; in others it is hard, harsh, dangerous, and spiky. But the ownership, meaning and demarcation are not agreed upon. It is 'non-border' frontier, a border-boundary without recognition which absorbs and reflects broader processes in the ever-changing but unresolved Cyprus problem. The contestations over the buffer zone are continuous and everchanging.

The demarcation of the buffer zone is a long dispute derived from the lack of agreement between the parties regarding the activities in and around the Dead Zone, as well as its "peculiar management, depending on the area" (Constantinou, 2021). The demarcation of the Green Line is based on a UN *Aide Memoire* from 1989 (updated in 2018) which has not been officially recognised by the two sides despite repeated calls by the Security Council. The Greek-Cypriot side does not want to grant unnecessary powers to UNFICYP and limit its sovereignty, whilst the Turkish-Cypriot side does not want to have no say by recognizing the sovereignty of the RoC. The UN Secretary General has recorded his concern, in his Report (2018), specifically the lack of updating and the non-official recognition of the Auxiliary Memorandum by both sides. The 2020 UN Resolution refers to "serious concern at the

increased number of violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines" [24] as these become regular (Novosselof, 2021). In practice is the two sides are following a la carte the directions of the Memorandum, rejecting, or selectively interpreting it depending on the issue and their objectives. Unilateral delimitation is unstable and dangerous. A UN official interviewed spoke about the realities that coincided with the pandemic and post-pandemic period. These were not necessarily caused by the pandemic, but were manifested during the pandemic, resulting from longer-term processes.

The UN official spoke of a "de facto paradigm shift" in the absence of the search for solution within which the UN is forced to operate without any official change in the mandate of the UN for Cyprus, as the UN said which "must absorb the realities of stagnation derived from the retreat of the prospect of a solution since the collapse of the talks in 2017". This is a highly erosive process ridden with dangers given that without the prospect of a solution in sight, the UN is constantly under pressure pertaining to the day-to-day management of the Green Line buffer zone with both sides questioning what the UN considers to be the demarcation of a territories ceded to it. The Greek-Cypriot diplomat and experts interviewed suggested that the changes during the pandemic have been negative and admitted that there is an increasing importance of migration issues that affect the Cyprus problem. Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot experts interviewed do not consider that there is currently a policy of 'instrumentalization' of irregular migration by Ankara, but they suggest the Turkish Army and authorities in the north could certainly do more if they had the will.

The change in policy became apparent at the rhetorical level through the official statements in 2018; the talk about hard-line migration policy intensified at the end of 2019, but the transference into policy was realised during the pandemic (Demetriou, Trimikliniotis, 2022a; 2022b). In the past, the notion that 'migration is a threat' had been a theme characterising far-right discourses and did not really resonate to broader sections of the population, nor did it not feature in official Governmental or party discourses (Trimikliniotis 1999; 2005; 2016;

[24] The relevant resolution notes: "11. Expresses serious concern at the increased number of violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines, calls once more on the sides and all involved parties to respect UNFICYP's mandated authority in, and delineation of, the buffer zone, urges the use of the 2018 United Nations aide-memoire by the sides to ensure peace and security in the buffer zone, and calls on the two sides to prevent unauthorised activities between the ceasefire lines;" Resolution 2506 (2020) / adopted by the Security Council at its 8709th meeting, on 30 January 2020.

Trimikliniotis, & Demetriou, 2011). However, the connection of migration and asylum to 'security' and 'threat' is a phenomenon that was accentuated with the economic crisis and the 'migration crisis' in Europe (Milioni et al 2015; Avraamidou et al 2019). Increasingly, it has become more securitized in media interventions of those associate the hard right (Morfitis, 2013; 2021). With the pandemic it was fully taken on as an official discourse, as demonstrated in the media analysis of this report and research undertaken.

During the pandemic that the government unleashed its unprecedented policy of pushbacks at sea which amount unlawful refoulement: The pandemic acted as a perfect storm through a *new sanitary or hygiene exemption regime* added to the country's Cypriot exception regimes which tend to proliferate and expand at the expense of rights (Constantinou, 2008; Trimikliniotis, 2010; 2018). An exchange of 'technologies of repression' and policy is developing between ideologically-politically related governments in Greece and the Republic of Cyprus (Parsanoglou et al 2022) and others (Italy, Malta, Greece) and eastern European (Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland).

Anti-immigration is however not ideologically speaking a consensus but a *dissensus and polarisation*. There is strong resistance, dissent, and solidarity towards migrants and asylum-seekers. Socialities and solidarity are derived from the current polarizing context of anti-immigration hysteria generated because of the hostile environment policies in Cyprus (Trimikliniotis 2020a; Demetriou and Trimikliniotis, 2022). Solidarity towards migrants and refugees during the pandemic years is emerging as a kind of social 'magma' (Cantorias, 1994). From outset of the pandemic, solidarity emerged opposed to the repressive logic and the restrictive measures as an alternative that utilises creative potential and draws on the resources of communities across the globe.

Such practices emerged immediately with the lockdown, as various local initiatives started to converge to create a country-based initiative. This is neither a charity-based approach, nor one that relies on the state. As state policy became repressive with the arrest and mass encampment of asylum-seekers and failing or unwilling to support migrants and asylum-seekers, more grass-root action-based initiatives grew. In this sense, in a highly polarised context, we are witnessing a "reassembling the social", which forces us to rethink our sociological terms (Latour, 2005: 261). All this in opposition to the hegemonic racist and antimigrant discourses, various manifestations of solidarity of praxis are emerging. 'Actor-

networks' are creatively engaging in process of making spaces for praxis. Activists interviewed spoke about the inspiration from doing something in such bleak times. At the heart of this is the polarisation. The 'revolt of the young' in defiance and in opposition to such extreme policies and rhetoric, attempting to ameliorate precarious living in squalor, exploitation, and misery, in camps or the community is producing a "time and space for solidarity" (Agustin and Jorgerberg, 2016) contra the pessimism of our times (Agustin and Jorgerberg 2019: 129).

Socialities were generated as 'mobile commons' located in context: via moving, struggling, learning how to survive, bringing in their own cultural and social resources, ideas and knowledge-systems new life was born in the form of new socialities (Trimikliniotis et al 2016; 2022). This is a process still in in the making as new groups are merging, formal and informal. As the crisis takes new shapes and forms due to the pandemic, economic crises, wars, conflicts, refugeehood and dispossession in the world, and locally as racialised border regimes are generating a hostile environment, resistance manifests itself in different forms of socialities and solidarities.

8. Conclusions

Cyprus is a "prisoner of geography" par excellence, where maps tell more or less "everything we need to know about global politics" (Marshall, 2015). Border regimes in Cyprus have since been ambiguous owing to the multiple divisions of the island. While the RoC lays claim over the territories of the whole island, the de facto division of the island, has led to a "border-like" reality, whose status remains contested and contingent. To this day there is no official and conclusive demarcation of the UN buffer zone, upon which all parties can agree. The underlying realities of the border regimes in Cyprus is a complex regime which encapsulates the interwoven, multiple, and convoluted 'divisions of Cyprus' (Anderson, 2008). This study examined some pertinent aspects and consequences of how the two communities have been impacted by COVID-19 and citizenship was affected by the policies of restrictions over individual freedoms and political participation due to the new 'state of exception' generated by the pandemic.

In particular, the study found that:

- The internal and external borders mobilized to separate 'us' from 'them' – us/them are being reshaped within an elastic biopolitics of the border that raise fear/hostility/suspicion against the Other. Even though the pandemic was an unprecedented situation generating its own logic of a hygiene state of exception, as regards the suspension of rights and particularly restrictive on mobility, it built on, connected a constellation of forces in ways that extended border regimes of exception already there. The study found that *a state of exception of immobility* emerged, when the illiberal migration policy frame encountered the 'Cypriot states of exception' hence tilting the balance of forces in the long division line of Cyprus. As we are proceeding toward the post-pandemic constellation, the study located trends that may lead towards more illiberal states of exception via the use of the precedent of immobility: The growing significance of novel forms revisionism of a European border regime via the attempts to legitimise barriers and processes of externalization of borders for the purposes of aversion and deterrence of asylum. The study observed processes of transformation of the Green Line from a UN-mandated management mechanism of fluid non-border of a cease-fire line since 1974 towards a serious *revisionism* that tilts the balance of forces in the long-established geopolitical 'divisions of Cyprus'. The UN warnings about the threats to peace and 'a hard border in Cyprus' that undermine the prospects for reunification of the country are defied by the RoC Government, solidifying the de facto partition. This was not confined to a discursive shift but was transformed into a policy based on specific ideological frames and producing real social effects. The ROC government deviated from a long standing tradition of amicable relations with UN agencies, accusing UNHCR of aiding and abetting 'people smuggling'.

- The pandemic has reinforced old and generated new processes of otherisation against i) migrants and asylum seekers and ii) those on the other side of the Green Line. The encounter of this new regime of immobility with old divisions of Cyprus is a re-bordering process that generates new geographies of violence and enmity. This is primarily manifested via new impetus to practices of denial of access to asylum, prevention, externalisation, and pushbacks at land and at sea which have become routinised.

- A new internal bordering regime was set up in the village of Chloraka, as a result of a ministerial decree prohibiting new asylum-seekers from settling in the village purporting to control the change in the demographic make-up of the area, leading to tensions in the streets, the further impoverishment of vulnerable asylum seekers and heightened racial rhetoric.

- Media has increasingly used negative depictions to reporting on migration. This reporting has not been driven by journalism ethics. and ethical codes that inform representation of citizens in the media. There is a general problem in observing, monitoring, and implementing of ethical standards in Cyprus. However, ethical journalism practices do not seem suspended altogether apply when it comes to migrants (including in the case of refugees and asylum seekers), with individuals being denied privacy protection and their individuality, as they are often and casually represented either as silent abject victims or as masses of threatening Others. This has led to polarising and dehumanising reporting that reduce public's understanding of migration and respect of migrants as humans and instead reproduce hate and fear among communities. Migrants appear in news stories to justify media and political agendas unrelated to their claims and rights – e.g., issues relating to borders, security, public health of citizens. This kind of reporting reduces migration to an issue that is only relevant when it comes to matters of security – national, health, economic. However, migration is a complex issue that demands knowledgeable reporting that enables the public to understand it and to form informed opinions.

- Digitalization proved to be important during the pandemic. The study found digitization did not and cannot compensate for restricted mobility and physical encounters. However, processes of digital networking prefigured and allowed for the reorganisation of groups willing to act in solidarity paving the ways for new imaginaries, particularly in the case of supporting migrants. These processes have generated also new *socialities* via performances of solidarity shaping mobile commons which contested border regimes. The state's welfare failures and polices of generating hostile environment was met with various reactions, often marking disagreement and dissent. During these times we have witnessed remarkable civic initiatives taking different shapes and forms of resistance, the praxis of solidarity and commons, as acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008).

- The study found that the construction of borders, citizenship and mobility are generating modalities of resistance and solidarity in Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in conjunction with migrant communities. Mobile commons are spreading within and between the Cypriot divisions lines and via moving. Struggles generate modes of survival that engender new life and potential for socialities and imaginaries, opening spaces for cooperation between anti-racists and reconciliation activists. Citizenship and its' potential, as *mobile citizenship transcends the divides and worlds are being re-imagined*.

The study used a multi-method approach to record discourses and practices that have shaped the states of exception and resistance to them in the context of the pandemic and its prospective aftermath in de facto divided Cyprus. The study located state and social processes that have adversely affected the lives and experiences in relation to borders, their outlook on the questions of migration/asylum and the Green Line and their views of mobile subjectivities and citizenship rights. It located new terrains in contestation and struggle between border regimes and states of exception versus processes and acts of claiming, reclaiming, or suppressing citizenship.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Research team, research questions and methodology

Research Team

The research team consisted of the following:

- Nicos Trimikliniotis (UNIC/ Principal investigator)
- Myria Georgiou (LSE Academic)
- Erol Kaymak
- George Charalambous (UNIC)
- Michaleangelo Anastasiou (UNIC/ University of Cyprus)
- Immanuel Achiri
- Vasilis Tsianos
- Corina Demetriou
- Afroditi-Maria Koulaxi
- Melis Mevsimler
- Ari Sitas

Methodology

Through a multi-method approach, the study recorded discourses and practices that shape the states of exception and resistance to them in the context of the pandemic and its prospective aftermath, combining interviews, focus groups, media content and visual analysis, shaped by public life's actors: citizens, non-citizens, political actors, policy makers, the media. Taking that numerous actors and acts are excluded from public discourse – especially the encounters across the crossing points and migrant experiences in closed camps – we also applied ethnographic observations as an important method of analysis. The work was divided into 8 work packages (WP) based on the nature of the work at various levels. This report presents the main findings (list of outputs provided in Appendix 2).

Media analysis

For the purposes of the media analysis the research team gathered data from 45 news stories and editorials from Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot newspapers and identified who speaks and what are the patterns in the representation of rights, freedoms and restrictions imposed to the society in the midst of crisis and its aftermath, in order to scrutinise how distinct 'others' are perceived and narrated over the internal border.

More specifically, the newspapers analysed from the Greek Cypriot side are Kathimerini Cyprus (conservative, right-wing), Philelefteros (liberal), Simerini (conservative, right-wing) as well as Dialogos (progressive, left-wing, and Havadis (liberal), Kibris (right-wing) and Afrika (left-wing) from the Turkish Cypriot side. The three themes observed in the study were: i) Bordering and green line mobility ii) Bordering and migrant mobility and iii) Bordering and mobility in Covid-19 governance. Methodologically, and driven by the conceptual framework of the project, we analysed each theme in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot press respectively across three periods: Early (January to April 2020): Green line crossing closure, Concealment of refugee camps and lockdown and curfew announcements; Middle (June to December 2020): Astomeritis/Mamari crossings and installation of barbed wire, ban of anti-racist/pro-migrant demonstrations and Os Dame and other/TC protests; Late (2021 calendar year): (conditional) opening of crossing, pushbacks and suspension of rights, and elections on both sides. In the context of data collection and where necessary, we expanded the phases up to a month. Analysis of the media across the political spectrum also enabled the enquiry into how existing social and political cleavage lines – pro/anti-immigration, nationalist-anti-nationalist, Left-Right – incorporate narratives of the border and the mobile commons.

Besides the focus on the textual narrative (analysed with the use of discourse analysis), a secondary visual analysis was conducted using images that accompanied the news stories or editorials. Our analysis draws on 18 images and seeks to examine whether the visual grammar, which manifests how the ways in which bordering is expressed as well as suspension of citizen and migrant rights, is articulated through the reproduction or destabilisation of Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot citizen or citizen versus noncitizen (migrants and asylum seekers) categories. The analysis sought to locate media discourse in relation to observations on the ground and in the context of interviews and focus group.

Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups

The proposal had envisioned for only 25 interviews. However, in the end we conducted 31 interviews with migrants (asylum-seekers, students, and others) and 45 interviews with experts, officials, activists and others (Greek-Cypriots, Turkish-Cypriots and other foreign nationals), in total 72 persons, some mere interviewed more than once. The experts interviewed consisted of a sample of the leading peace-building and antiracism and migrant-support activists from both communities, as well as experts and diplomats with long experience with handling the Cyprus problem (negotiations for peace-making, daily management of the peacekeeping) and/or expertise in migration and human rights issues. Moreover, over and above these interview, numerous others with special knowledge (case workers, farmers, police officers) were interviewed or consulted. This was deemed necessary to address various aspects of the highly complex situation pertaining to the Cyprus problem and the interwoven and multifaceted divisions of Cyprus as bordering process became increasingly entangled with geopolitical and migration and asylum issues during the pandemic and post-pandemic period.

The interviews examine actor perspectives on how Covid19 has affected the lives and experiences in relation to borders, their outlook on the questions of migration/asylum and the Green Line and their views of mobile subjectivities and citizenship rights. Interviews were structured to flesh out either cooperation and adherence to border regimes, or their subversion or challenge and illuminates acts of claiming, reclaiming, or suppressing citizenship. As anticipated, questions about legitimacy of policies were key questions revealing and explaining distinctions between actors' or groups of actors' representations of the other.

The three focus groups conducted covered samples of three distinct cohorts. The first focus group, was predominantly male, consisted of both G/Cs and T/Cs, but was predominantly G/C. Save for two, the participants in the first group were over the age of 40. The second group consisted of adults in their twenties and early thirties, mostly women, of Turkish Cypriot origin. The third focus group consisted of women asylum-seekers. The aim of the focus groups was to uncover social dynamics over questions of border experiences, understandings of

legitimacy and orientations over citizenship conflict during the pandemic, explore practices and limits to digital solidarity in times of physical distance and harder borders.

Ethnographic observations

During the two-year period we conducted ethnographic work to capture some instances and encounters that occurred during the pandemic period. Over the last two years the research team conducted on-field ethnography work was undertaken with numerous visits and participant observation in demonstrations, mobilisations and events. These included participation in numerous demonstrations organised by groups in solidarity for migrants, against authoritarian practices and mobility restrictions. The locations were chosen to conduct our net(h)nography of the border regime as deployed around flexible and porous border zones, investigating border crossings, mobility tactics and strategies of transnational refugees and undocumented migrants in border zones, understood as places of contested irregularity. It consisted of the following:

- On-site visits to zones which had particular interest as liminal spaces of exception and/or contestation and dissent, such as the buffer zone area near the village of Astromeritis where the Ministry of interior of the RoC has placed electric gates and barbed wire.
- The three camps visited (Pournara, Kofinou, Limnes) where different regimes and reception conditions but which were made into closed centres of de facto detention camps
- We attended numerous demonstration the inner city of Nicosia where numerous protests occurred near the checkpoints of Ledra street, Ledra Palace and round the city
- We had several on-site vits to the village of Chloraka in the district of Pafos where the Minister of interior issues an unprecedented decree that forbids any more asylum-seekers from residing there on the ground that it has undermined the 'demographic balance' of the village. This is ana example of an internalisation of the bordering and the generation of new state of exception.

- Ethnographic visit in the northern part of Cyprus persons who told us about migration and asylum issues.

Biographical notes of researchers

Prof. Nicos Trimikliniotis

A multidisciplinary scholar with sociological and socio-legal expertise and long experience in project management, scientific overview of research projects, scientific research, report writing and review of articles for various scientific journals. He is a Professor of Sociology, Social science and Law at UNIC, Director of the Centre for Fundamental Rights with both legal sociological training and practice. He has over 20 years of experience as scientific director in EU-funded fundamental rights and sociology research projects, and several nationally funded projects. He has served as national expert in numerous EU level expert networks in the fields of fundamental rights, nationality, immigration, asylum, labour law, and anti-discrimination.

Prof. Myria Georgiou (LSE Academic)

Professor in Media and Communications with extensive fieldwork research experience across Europe, including Cyprus and Greece, and the US. An internationally recognised scholar on media, ethnicity, and migration, author and editor of four books, more than 40 peer reviewed articles and numerous policy reports, including the widely quoted 2017 Council of Europe report 'Media coverage of the Refugee crisis' [25]. She has conducted and led cross-national research for more than 20 years, within projects funded by the EU, FRA, and Rockefeller Foundation, among others. She has also acted as a consultant for the Council of Europe in the context of three different projects on media, migration, diversity, and intercultural communication and she has served on advisory boards and award committees for organisation.

Prof. Erol Kaymak

Professor of International Relations at Eastern Mediterranean University. He has published research reports for numerous organizations. Dr. Kaymak is co-founder of and

[25] The report is available at https://rm.coe.int/1680706b00

former Research Director at the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD), a think-tank organisation that uses participatory research to contribute to transformative peace by making effective and sustainable policy recommendations that seek to support informed decision-making, based on the values of inclusivity, accountability and democracy. SeeD specializes in the development of innovative quantitative methodologies for use in peacebuilding contexts. Originally growing out of a Cyprus-based initiative (a.k.a Cyprus 2015), SeeD is now implementing programmes across multiple contexts in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Ass. Prof. Giorgos Charalambous

Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Nicosia, working in the field of comparative European politics and political sociology and particularly specialising in party politics, political ideologies and especially those critical of capitalism, social contention and political culture, the domestic politics of European integration and southern European societies and politics, in particular during the post-2008 crisis. He also has an interest in theories and debates of critical political economy. Giorgos is co-coordinator of the BA in European Studies and International Relations and is also currently serving as book reviews editor of *The Cyprus Review*.

Prof. Vassilis Tsianos,

He is a Professor of sociology at University of Kiel. He is a migration expert who has developed innovative research methods in specialist areas which have seen a massive development over the last years. These include the innovative 'nethography' of border regime methodology, methods to examine data processing and surveillance and other methods to study digitalities, utilising these methods to study migration, asylum, racism, discrimination, borders, data protection and surveillance, EU integration and fundamental rights. These methods assist scholars immensely in explaining and understanding the transformations of social life in the current era and the operational effectiveness of proper monitoring of fundamental rights and to assess the sociological implications for policy-making.

Corina Demetriou

A lawyer and legal researcher with over 15 years of experience in research for EU projects with expertise on all MAF areas, Director of Symfiliosi and legal expert of the Cypriot FRANET team since 2014. From 2007 onwards, she serves as National Expert of the European Network of Legal Experts in the Anti-discrimination field (www.equalitylaw.eu). In recent years she authored a number of legal expert reports for various EU institutions and EU agencies under research projects led by EU: hate speech and hate crime, children in judicial proceedings, gender-based violence, FGM, children with disabilities, the impact of the crisis on fundamental rights, discrimination and the 2020 agenda, the legal migration directives and others.

Prof. Ari Sitas

A sociologist, poet and dramatist. He is the Chair of the National Institute for the Humanities and the social Sciences in South Africa, a Gutenberg Chair at the University of Strasbourg and an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Cape Town responsible for the Re-Centring AfroAsia Project which explores the movement of people, material, musical and symbolic forms between 700-1500 CE. He served as expert of the Cypriot FRANET team since 2014. He has extensive research and fieldwork experience in South Africa, India and Cyprus. Since late 1990s he participated in fieldwork research on racism and youth in Cyprus and published scholarly works on studies on racism, immigration and youth, as well as his studies and interventions since the millennium regarding the troubled relations between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots and the potential transcending the division, prejudices and discrimination.

Afroditi-Maria Koulaxi

Afroditi is a Guest Teacher in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science and an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths. Her research cross-fertilises theories and methods from media and communications, sociology and urban studies and contributes to the literature on media and identity at times of crisis. Afroditi approaches citizens' identity – that emerges at the juncture of experience and

narrative – in a dialogical framework, which is always defined through the migrant noncitizen. Her work was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Melis Mevsimler

Melis is a Visiting Senior Researcher at the Ada Lovelace Institute. Her research aims to understand short- and long-term impact of Covid-19 technologies on society, inequalities, and healthcare systems. Melis has a PhD in Digital Media and Migration from Utrecht University where she investigated the ways in which migrant women living in London use digital media technologies as they relate to identity and citizenship. She then went on to work at Social Mobility Commission focusing on how digital inclusion can positively impact social mobility in the UK. She is passionate about promoting participation in data-driven and digital public policies by disadvantaged social groups.

Michelangelo Anastasiou

Michaelangelo holds a PhD in sociology and is a sociology instructor at the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cyprus. His recently published monograph, *Nationalism and Hegemony: The Consolidation of the Nation in Social and Political Life* (Routledge), develops a post-foundational theory of nationalism. He is also a collaborator of the Centre for Fundamental Rights at the University of Nicosia working on nationalism, borders, citizenship, equality, and rights. His current research interests include nationalism, populism, technology and affect.

Emmanuel Achiri

Emmanuel Achiri is a human rights advocate, a humanitarian crisis response analyst, and a PhD candidate at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus (northern part). The focus of his research is on the intersection between forced migration, externalization and technology, He is also co-founder and project manager for VOIS Cyprus, an organization advocating for the rights of migrants and vulnerable groups in the northern part of Cyprus. Additionally, he is an independent consultant who has worked with the European Programme for Integration and Migration, and Urban-A, an Oslo-based consultancy firm which delivers analysis and knowledge-building on complex and fragile environments.

Email: Emmanuel.achiri@emu.edu.tr (it can be published on the site)

Appendix 2 List of deliverables undertaken and planned

Numerous academic and policy papers were presented and published drawing the research form the study. We have listed a sample of these:

Academic papers

- Trimikliniotis, N., Tsianos, V., Parsanoglou, D. (2022) "Mobile Commons in the Pre-Pandemic, Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Era: Drawing from Mobility Experiences in Post-Migrant Times", *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, ISSN: 2081-8130, Nr 4(46)/2022 – *The Communes and Other Mobile Commons*, pp. 49-92.

- Trimikliniotis, N., Tsianos, V. (2023), "A refugee crisis or a crisis of anti-immigrant politics? Hostile refugee reception, the pandemic and new solidarities in Cyprus", Ioakimides, V. and Wyllie, A. (eds.) Social Work's Histories of Complicity and Resistance, A Tale of Two Professions, Policy Press.

- Book is being planned for 2024.

- Numerous academic papers are being discussed based on various work packages as well as combining some of them.

Policy papers

- Demetriou, C. and Trimikliniotis, N. (2022) *Migration and Asylum during the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Report on Cyprus*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) , July 2022.

- Demetriou, C. and Trimikliniotis, N. (2022) *Migration and Asylum during the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic: FES BRIEFING*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), July 2022.

- Demetriou, C. and Trimikliniotis, N. (2022) *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Fundamental Rights: A Report on Cyprus*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) July 2022.

- Demetriou, C. and Trimikliniotis, N. (2022) *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Fundamental Rights: A Report on Cyprus: FES BRIEFING*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), July 2022.

- Policy Brief for this project.

Conference papers

- 'Researching border regime(s) during the pandemic: evidence from Cyprus' at the virtual Conference 'Contemporary Societies in Motion', paper given by Nicos Professor Trimikliniotis gave a presentation on 27-28 of May 2021

- "Racial B/Orders- Violence, State Crimes: The production of space as border regimes of exception normalization and enmity in Southeastern Europe", paper by Nicos Trimikliniotis, Vassilis Tsianos for Conference *Emergency justice and criminalisation illegal entry: a border criminology approach,* Oxford *supported* by the Research Centre for the Humanities (RCH), 1 December 2022.

- "Immigration, Asylum and Rights: Social Work Against State Crimes and the Construction of a Hostile Environment for Refugees & Migrants" Keynote paper by Nicos Trimikliniotis, at conference *Refugee Challenges and Perspectives,* 24 October 2022 organised by the University of Cyprus, the Universitas Foundation, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cyprus (UNHCR) and Bridges for Tomorrow at the University of Cyprus.

- "Pushbacks, encampment and Cypriot border regimes of exception: Impoverishment, barbed wire and hostile environment as migration management", Keynote paper by Nicos Trimikliniotis, at CMI workshop, Panel: Containment and (im-)mobility, Cyprus Workshop, Nicosia 29-30 April 2022, Chr. Michelsen Institute and funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

- "Mobile commons, states of exception and border regimes: struggles, digitalities and resistance in Eastern Mediterranean in the pandemic crisis", conference paper by Nicos Trimikliniotis for The 3rd EuroMedMig national workshop - *Migration in the digital era: exploring newdata, practices, and lifestyles*, Lisbon Portugal, 25 March 2021.

- 'The production of borders and the politics of enmity in South-Eastern Europe'**,** Paper accepted for the European sociological association conference, *Departures, arrivals, border-crossings: changing migrations in times of crises*, Midterm Conference of ESA's

Research Network 35 “Sociology of Migration”, in collaboration with the University Federico II, March 30-31, 2023, University Federico II, Naples (Italy).

Abstract: This presentation focuses on one aspect of the transformation of the European border regime, as it is realised and specialised in the South-Eastern European border zone. As a starting point we take the finding that the daily practice of realising the border has been decisively transformed in recent years. Violent acts such as push-backs have become the *de facto* norm at many parts of the EU's external borders. We take the new normalisation of violent border control practices, the over-documentation of its evidence, and the resulting analysis of the suspension of the rule of law at Europe's borders as a starting point to explore the political, social, and spatial logics underlying these recent dynamics. We believe that the multiple and structural violations of international and European law at Europe's borders are not an accident, nor a simple deviation from the rule of law paradigm. Rather, we argue that due to the failure of the migration management paradigm, as evidenced by the migrations of 2015-16, border control practices re-centre the national logics that the European project, and in particular the Europeanisation of migration and border policies, they had only superficially suppressed in the context of their post-national transformation. In the present precariously post-emergency phase of the European border regime, formal and informal forms of 'politics of enmity' occupy significant space. These occupy an important space both in the need for borders to be constantly reproduced through ‘border work’, i.e. through constant patching and repair work, and in the reflexive nature of border policies, i.e. in the reaction of politicians to border crises, either they take the form of improvised warehouses managed by self-appointed national guards in Evros, or representatives of the police and border guards, or representatives of the Cypriot port authorities.

- **Digital Border Regimes: Racialisation and Resistance to States of Exception**

Paper submitted by Nicos Trimikliniotis for the Department of Media and Communications 20th anniversary conference 'Media Futures', 15 - 16 June 2023, LSE

Abstract: This paper discusses how digital bordering contributes to the making and resisting to the suspension of the rule of law at Europe's borders, and how digitization of transnational mobility control reflects political, social, and spatial logics of western migration policies. It examines the processes of transformation of the European border regime in the specific context of the South-Eastern European border zone, drawing on empirical work. It conceptualizes the *bordering* as a contested terrain of struggle: digitalities have proliferated spaces for this terrain. On the one hand, states utilizing new technologies attempt to extend regimes of exceptions and derogations. On the other, migrants, refugees, and activists in their struggles for survival transform and generate the daily practice of realising the mobile commons via acts of resistance and social spaces. In the post-pandemic context, particularly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the trade war that followed, the *migration/asylum dissensus* in Europe and beyond is becoming more central in an ever more polarized and crisis-ridden European order which has seen a strengthening of the racialized politics of hatred. Migration is increasingly securitized and weaponized in international politics in the EU with its' neighbours depicted as 'hybrid warfare' and 'invasion of non-combatants'. Digitalities become even more important in this context in the surveillance and spread of fear and moral panic, but also in documenting and claiming human rights abuses and violations such as push-backs and other violent border control practices. Migration as a mass population movement is made up of many aspects which can work in parallel, sometimes in contradiction, and symbiotically at other times. It has a dual function as both part of 'the order of things' (i.e. metaphors of 'safety valve') and a part of war (broadly defined) as well as part of *disorder*, as it causes turbulence, and trouble and can unsettle societies, setting in motion transformation processes whose direction and extent are often difficult to predict. There are systemic factors that constantly generate restrictions to rights, barriers, borders, and fortresses. The movement of populations causes constant turbulence and disruption of order; it alters social relations as the encounters between people cause unchartered transformations. The encounters between migrants and others unleash processes that are uncharted, unrated, and uncertain.

- Final conference where the research team will present the findings to academics, policy-makers, experts and active citizens and migrant/refugees. This is schedule for 7-8 April 2023 at the University of Nicosia.
- Public event, sponsored by Dept of Media and Communications, LSE.
- Within 2 years from the end of the project, we will archive the data in appropriate national and international archives, so that they are publicly available for secondary analysis Transcribed interviews and media analysis data will be archived in a blog to be constructed towards the end of the project and managed by research assistants.

Appendix 3 Focus Groups

Focus Group 1 -Bicommunal activists from both sides

Focus Group took place on Monday 5 December 2022, Nicosia

Name	ethnicity/ nationality	Gender	Age	capacity
AFG1	T/C	Male	59	bicommunal activist, trade unionist
BFG1	G/C	Male	66	Bicommunal relative of missing persons
CFG1	T/C	Male	45	bicommunal activist
DFG1	T/C	Female	35	bicommunal activist, lecturer
EFG1	G/C	Female	40	bicommunal activist,
FFG1	G/C	Male	64	bicommunal activist
GFG1	G/C	Male	60	bicommunal activist, musician
HFG1	G/C	male	65	bicommunal activist, retired teacher
IFG1	G/C	Male	25	Bicommunal activist, student

Focus Group 2 – Turkish-Cypriot Human rights and NGO activists

Focus Group took place on Monday 5 December 2022, Nicosia

Name	**Ethnicity/ nationality**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Capacity**
AFG2	T/C	Female	36	Human rights activist, lawyer
BFG2	T/C	Female	40	Bicommunal activist, works for MEP
CFG2	T/C	Female	29	Human rights, lawyer for NGO
DFG2	T/C	Female	31	Human rights activist, NGO worker and student
EFG2	T/C	Female	27	Human rights activist, NGO worker
FFG2	T/C	Male	23	Human rights activist, Lawyer for NGO

Focus Group 3 – Women asylum-seekers

Focus Group took place on Monday 1 December 2022, Nicosia

Name	**Country of origin**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Arrival Cyprus**
AFG3	Somalia	Female	35	Feb-22
BFG3	Somalia	Female	30	Feb-22
CFG3	Somalia	Female	42	Feb-22
DFG3	Somalia	Female	23	Mar-22
EFG3	Yemen	Female	26	Feb-22
FFG3	Somalia	Female	25	Mar-22

Appendix 4 Interviews

Interviews with officials, experts, and activists

Name	**Ethnicity/ Nationality**	**Gender/ age**	**Capacity**	**Date of Interview**
1. Christos	G/C	Male 65	Peace activist	2 Dec 2022
2. Salim	T/C	Male 58	Trade unionist	10 Nov 2022
3. Ali	T/C	Male 45	Peace activist	9 Nov 2022
4. Andri	G/C	Female 47	Peace activist	5 October 2022
5. Elias	G/C	Male 35	Peace activist	5 December 2022
6. Makis	G/C	Male 58	Musician/ Peace activist	30 November 2022
7. Lambros	G/C	Male 25	Student	4 December 2022
8. Andreas	G/C	Male 63	Peace activist	5 December 2022
9. Alecos	G/C	Male 65	teacher	3 December 2022
10. Femina	T/C	Female 32	teacher	8 December 2022
11. Evgenia	G/C	Female 40	teacher	12 November 2022
12. Kemal	T/C	Male 53	Business trade	10 October 2022
13. Mehmet	T/C	Male 60	Researcher	7 December 2022
14. Meral	T/C	Female 33	Social workers	19 April 2021
15. Oncel	T/C	Male 45	Lawyer	11 April 2021
16. Karin	T/C	Female 28	Student	10 December 2022
17. Fay	T/C	Female 35	Expert, UN	12 May 2022
18. Georgia	G/C	Female 53	Expert, UN	11 May 2022
19. Mina	T/C	Female 26	Bicommunal activist and artist	15 June 2022
20. Marco	EU citizen	Male 53	Expert UN	19 May 2021
21. Charis	G/C	Male 39	Antiracist activist	20 May 2022
22. Marina	G/C	Female 40	Antiracist activist	21 May 2022
23. Eliosa	EU citizen	Male 26	Antiracist activist	15 September 2022
24. Thomas	G/C	Male 65	International law and Cyprus expert	9 December 2022
25. Makis	G/C	Male 45	Expert, diplomat	7 December 2022
26. Eleni	G/C	F 40	Lawyer	11 June 2022
27. Maria	G/C	F 43	Officer Pournara	12 May 2022
28. Marios	G/C	Male 41	NGO officer	11 May 2022
29. Dora	British	F 69	NGO activist	22 July 2021
30. Jacob	British	Male 50	UN expert	14-Dec-22
31. Michael	G/C	Male 25	NGO case worker	11 May 2022

32. Lambros	G/C	Male 66	Farmer	1 March 2021
33. Lakis	G/C	Male 45	farmer	12 Sept 2022
34. Giannis	G/C	Male 60	farmer	12 Sept 2022
35. Giorgos	G/C	Male 67	Retired lawyer	16 June 2022
36. Periklis	G/C	Male 70	Landlord	18 July 2022
37. Gina	EU citizen	Female 58	NGO expert	20 Feb 2021
38. Sevina	G/C	Female 62	NGO expert	16 March 2022
39. Emre	T/C	Male	Expert diplomat	26-Dec-22
40. Ahmet	T/C	Male 27	Expert diplomat	27-Dec-22
41. Michalis	G/C	Male 59	Police officer	11 Sept 2022
42. Costas	G/C	Male 36	Trade unionist	21 Dec-22

Interviews with migrants and asylum-seekers

Name	country of origin	Gender / age	arrival date	status Reside	encampment	Date of interview	Place of interview	Other
43. N	Syria	M 42	2016	Refugee, Pafos	No	03/02/22	Nicosia	
44. A	Yemen	M	2021	A-S, Limassol	Pournara	10/03/22	Kofinou	Pushback
45. H	Syria	M 32	2021	A-S Kofinou	Kofinou	10/06/22	Kofinou	Pushback
46. K	Syria	F 25	2021	A-S Kofinou	Kofinou	10/06/22		pushback
47. F	DRC	F 26	2022	A-S	Pournara	12/09/22	Nicosia	
48. J	Cameroon	F 34	Oct-22	A-S	Pournara	10/07/22	Nicosia	torture
49. I	Gambia	M 30	2018	A-S	No	11/07/22	Nicosia	
50. D	Cameroon	M 26	2021	Limbo A-S	No	26/07/21	Nicosia	Pushback land
51. J	Cameroon	F 21	2021	Limbo, A-S	No	26/07/21	Nicosia	pushback
52. E	Cameroon	M 20	2021	Limbo A-S	No	26/07/21	Nicosia	pushback
53. P	India	M 23	2017	A-S	no	20/12/22	Nicosia	Wort worker
54. A	India	M 23	2018	Student RoC	no	20/12/22	Nicosia	Wort Worker
55. A1	Afghanistan	M 26	Oct-2022	A-S	Pournara	11/12/22	Nicosia	
56. S	Afghanistan	M 26	Oct-22	A-S	Pournara	11/12/22	Nicosia	
57. N1	Somalia	F 32	Feb-22	A-S	Pournara	12/12/22	Nicosia	
58. N2	Somalia	F 30	Feb-22	A-S	Pournara	10/12/22	Nicosia	
59. N3	Somalia	F 56	Mar-22	A-S	Pournara	08/12/22	Nicosia	
60. K1	Yemen	F 26	Feb-22	A-S	Pournara	08/12/22	Nicosia	
61. R	Somalia	F 24	Mar-22	A-S	Pournara	08/12/22	Nicosia	
62. A3	Somalia	F 23	Mar-22	A-S	Pournara	11/12/22	Nicosia	
63. L	Cameroon	M 32	2013	Student -north	No	13/03/22	Famagusta	
64. C	Cameroon	M 39	2021	Student - north	no	24/03/22	Famagusta	

65. R2	Liberia	M 23	Oct 20	Student north	no	14/04/22	Famagusta	
66. J1	DCR	F 20	2020	student north	No	22/04/22	Famagusta	
67. C1	Uganda	M 28	2016	Student north	No	19/03/22	Nicosia north	Intends to cross
68. K	Nigeria	M 34	Arp 22	Student north	No	Arp 22	Nicosia, north	Intends
69. N4	Cameroon	M 34	2013	Student north	No	Mar-22	Famagusta	Not cross
70. P	Cameroon	F 32	2019	Student north	No	April22	Nicosia, north	Maybe
71. C2	South Africa	F 23	2021	Student north	No	April 22	Nicosia, north	maybe
72. M	Syria	M 60	2000	migrant status	No	Apr-21	Chloraka	
73. N5	DRC	F 21	2020	A-S	Pournara	Jun-21	Nicosia	victim of violence

Appendix 5 Executive summary

- This study investigates the impact of the emergency measures on community relations, fundamental rights, and mobility rights during the Covid19 pandemic in Cyprus. On the one hand it examined the emergence and establishment of states of exception, which built upon the existing ones and on the other, the intensification of solidarity aiming to counter those restrictions.

- It found that internal and external borders mobilised to separate 'us' from 'them', as the 'us/them' was reshaped within an elastic biopolitics of the border that raise fear, hostility, suspicion against the Other. The situation created by the Covid19 pandemic was an unprecedented emergency that generated a hygiene state of exception with suspension of rights. This regime is particularly restrictive on mobility, hitting the most vulnerable more severely, often migrants and asylum-seekers. This state of exception however was built upon existing regimes of exception by *extending old* and *generating new* bordering processes. The pandemic has unleashed *a state exception of immobility*, an illiberal policy frame towards migration and asylum, which encounters the existing 'Cypriot states of exception', which is a manifestation of the Cyprus problem. This affects peace-keeping, the relations between the two communities and the peace-making.

- The study has shown how processes of otherisation affect (a) the migrant and asylum seeker as Other and (b) those on the other side of the Green Line as Other. The encounter of new regimes of immobility to the old divisions of Cyprus is a re-bordering process pertaining to various state practices. This has generated logics of authoritarian and disproportional measures to restrict mobility and demonstrations, as well as a new impetus to practices of denial of access to asylum, prevention, externalisation, and pushbacks on land. Also, there was internal bordering via the emergence of new regimes of exception, such as the case the village of Chloraka in Paphos where the new settlement of asylum-seekers was prohibited on the pretext of protecting the 'demographic balance'.

- Securitisation measures that enhance borders and control of populations and territories – with an emphasis on strict restrictions of mobility for citizens but even more so for migrants – dominated the political and media agendas during the pandemic. Human rights became subjected to wider agendas of bordering and security and there was little

consistency in safeguarding the protection especially of those needing it most – refugees and those at the social margins.

- The police were given unprecedented powers, with no safeguards against excesses and abuses. In the absence of a policy and legal framework to address police racial profiling, the numerous allegations for discriminatory stop and search practices were left unaddressed. The total ban against street protests, of doubtful medical validity or legality, was used as context for the police to apply unprecedentedly excessive force against demonstrators, with no accountability or resort to justice.

- Despite the packages purporting to protect workers during the lockdown suspension of operations, there were no measures to protect vulnerable migrant workers. This exclusion generated poverty and deprivation, desperation amongst these communities, who were entirely dependent on informal support and solidarity from informal groups which sprang during these difficult times.

- Media on both sides of the divide mostly consented to the strictest governmental measures of suspended mobility for citizens, but even more so for migrants. This was particularly the case during the first phase of the pandemic when media overwhelmingly consented to curfews, lockdowns and the closure of the checkpoints; in the later phases, media responses to restrictions where more mixed, though most often than not, any criticism was less so associated with human and civil rights and more associated with wider political agendas and business interests.

- During the pandemic lockdown, access to asylum was suspended and no migration was allowed. With the end of the lockdown and ban on mobility, the number of irregular entrants and asylum applications has risen to levels not experienced before. As migration has become a hot political issue in debates on both sides of the divide, the UN noted that migration and asylum issue has become a serious issue for peace-keeping. Measures taken by the two sides threaten to create a hard border and to violate the rights of asylum-seekers. The fact that two sides seem unable cannot agree on a process to address these issues, suspecting that the other side will politically capitalise on the subject, leads to further deterioration of the problems and makes the immigration-based re-bordering unstable and dangerous.

- Upon the outbreak of the pandemic, the authorities on both sides of the country introduced population and mobility control measures, once unimaginable. Both sided used authoritarian colonial legal instruments to implement lockdowns and restrict right during the emergency salutation and created a dangerous precedent.
- In the south, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus authorities suspended the asylum system and has since made pushbacks at land and at sea a regular matter, forced transfer asylum seekers into camps, converted the camps into closed centres, placed barbed wire at certain spots along the buffer zone and generally lowering of reception conditions. After the easing of the measures of migration and asylum has become central in political debates. Alongside repressive measures, which sought to justify on account of the pandemic, the Government introduced a tough anti-immigrant rhetoric connecting migrants to criminality and allegations that Muslims were being sent by Turkey in order to alter the country's demographic character. This rhetoric was also prominent in a significant section of mainstream media. Although the complicity of the Turkish Government in the migration flows to Cyprus is merely an assumption, its repetition through the media has normalised it and was soon considered a fact, despite the total absence of an evidential basis.
- In the north, the authorities of the (unrecognised) Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus authorities also introduced restrictive measures, but this coincided with major economic deterioration due to the collapse of Turkish lira. Subsidised systems were introduced but migrants were excluded. Also, detention of migrants was extended. There is no asylum system in the north and international protection is precarious, based on informal arrangements with UNHCR.
- During the lockdown, arrivals dropped significantly. However, since 2021, arrivals risen, reaching unprecedented levels. Conspiracy theory explanations favoured by the Government and the media are unsupported by evidence. The increases are explained by regional developments, crises, wars and conflicts, the closures of other routes to Europe, the process of solidifying the de facto partition of Cyprus with the unrecognised TRNC in the north, economic hardship due to the collapse of the Turkish lira, and profiteering opportunities by university of questionable quality in the north and opportunistic smuggling networks.

- Digitization did not compensate for restricted mobility and physical encounters. However, processes of digital networking and organised prefigured and reassembled in new ways, with solidarity paving the ways for new socialities and social imaginaries.
- During this period acts of solidarity generated new socialities which contested border regimes and states of exception. The state's welfare failures and polices of generating hostile environment was met with various reactions, often marking disagreement and dissent. The study found remarkable civic initiatives taking different shapes and forms of resistance, the praxis of solidarity towards asylum-seekers and refugees by various informal groups.
- The reconstruction of borders in a 'border society' such as Cyprus is also reshaping citizenship and mobility. The pandemic has generated restrictions and regimes of exception but is also engendering modalities of resistance and solidarity in the contexts of the de facto divided Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities. Forms of mobile commons are spreading within and betwixt the Cypriot divisions lines and via moving. Struggles are generating modes of survival that engender new lives and potential for socialities and social imaginaries, opening spaces for cooperation between anti-racists and reconciliation activists. This is prefiguring a potential for reassembling socialities, paving ways for social imaginaries of a *mobile citizenship* transcending old and new divisions of Cyprus and the world.

Appendix 6 Pictures and commentary from the fieldwork and media

1. The Pournara camp

We interviewed caseworkers who work in the centre and several asylum-seekers who have stayed there.

The official entry gate of Pournara

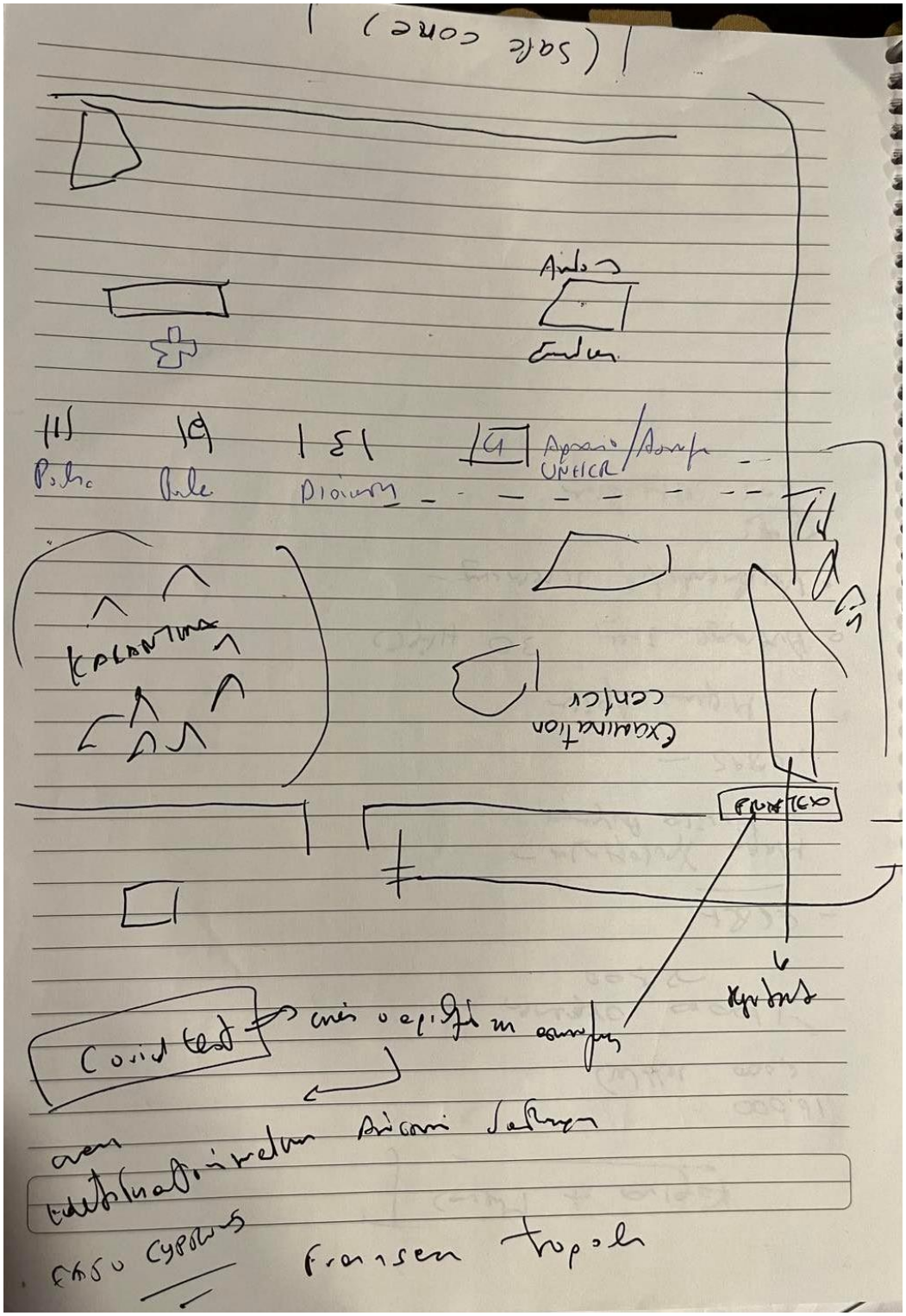
An unofficial entry/exit at the back of Pournara

Picture of one of the numerous holes in camp, unofficial entry/exit. Picture by Nicos Trimikliniotis, 12 March 2022.

Asylum-seekers entering from the unofficial entry of the side of Pournara. Picture by Nicos Trimikliniotis, 12 March 2022.

2021, a resident from the camp sent the research team the following picture:

Picture from the sewers flooding in Pournara

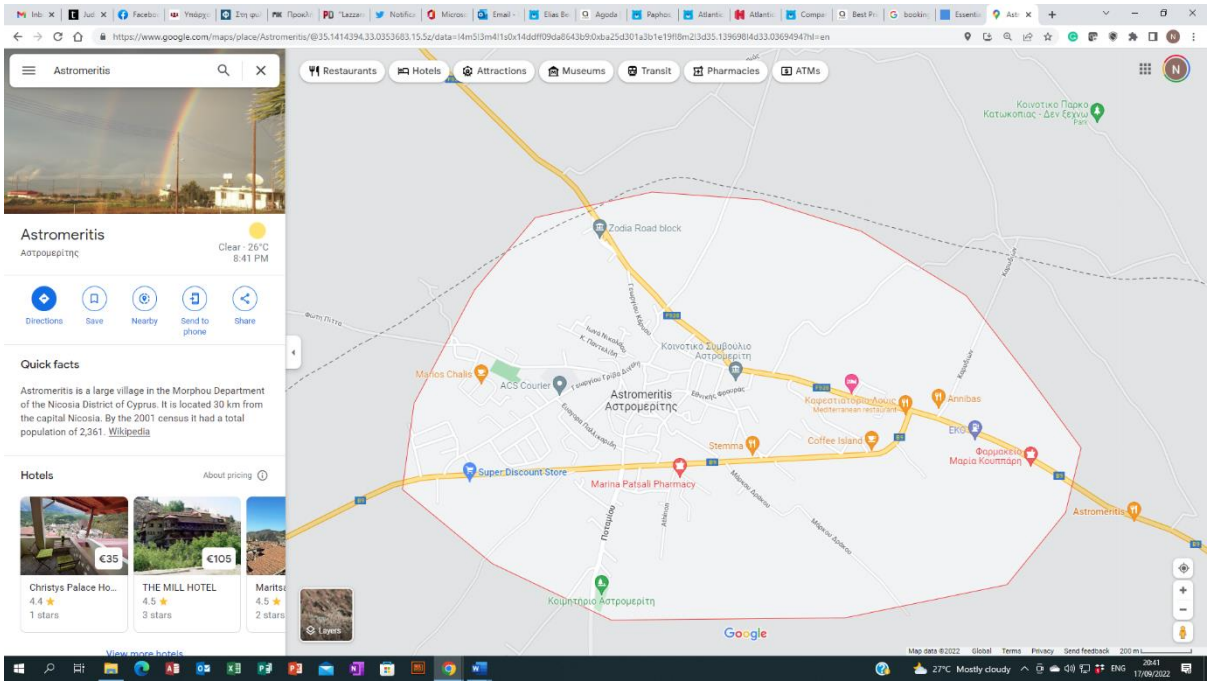


Pournara map drawn from an officer from Pournara interviewed

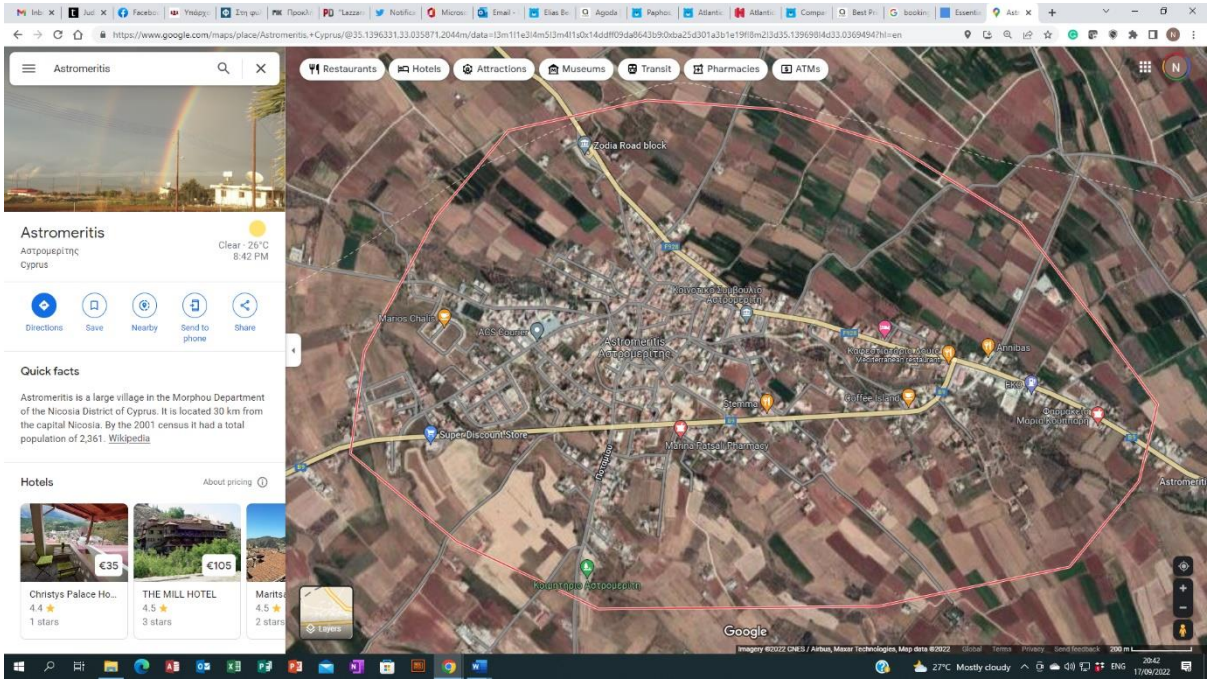
2. Limnes ‘Reception Centre for International Protection’

3. Astromeritis village and barbed wire

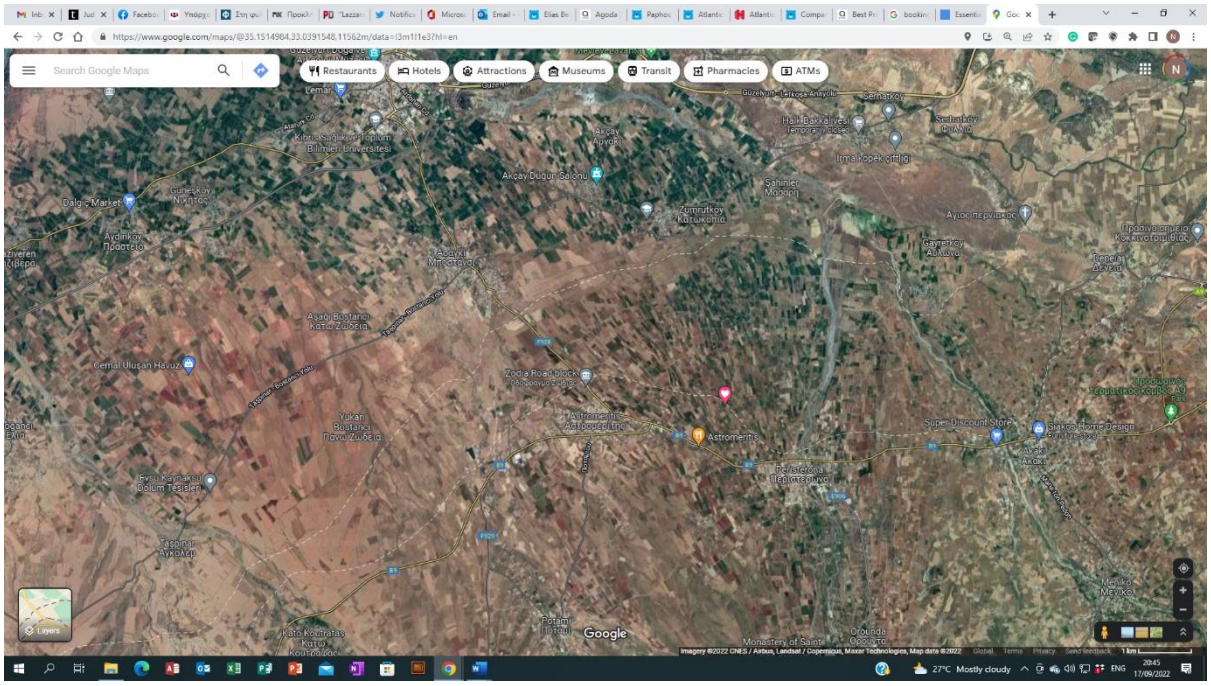
Below are relevant maps of Astromeritis from google maps.



The maps below shows how farmland is cultivated in the buffer zone



Zodia Road block
Marios Chalis
ACS Courier
Astromeritis
Αστρομερίτης
Annibas
Coffee Island
Stemma
SuperDiscount Store
Marina Patsali Pharmacy
Κοιμητήριο Αστρομερίτη
Google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Museums
Transit
Pharmacies
ATMs
Zodia Road block
Astromeritis
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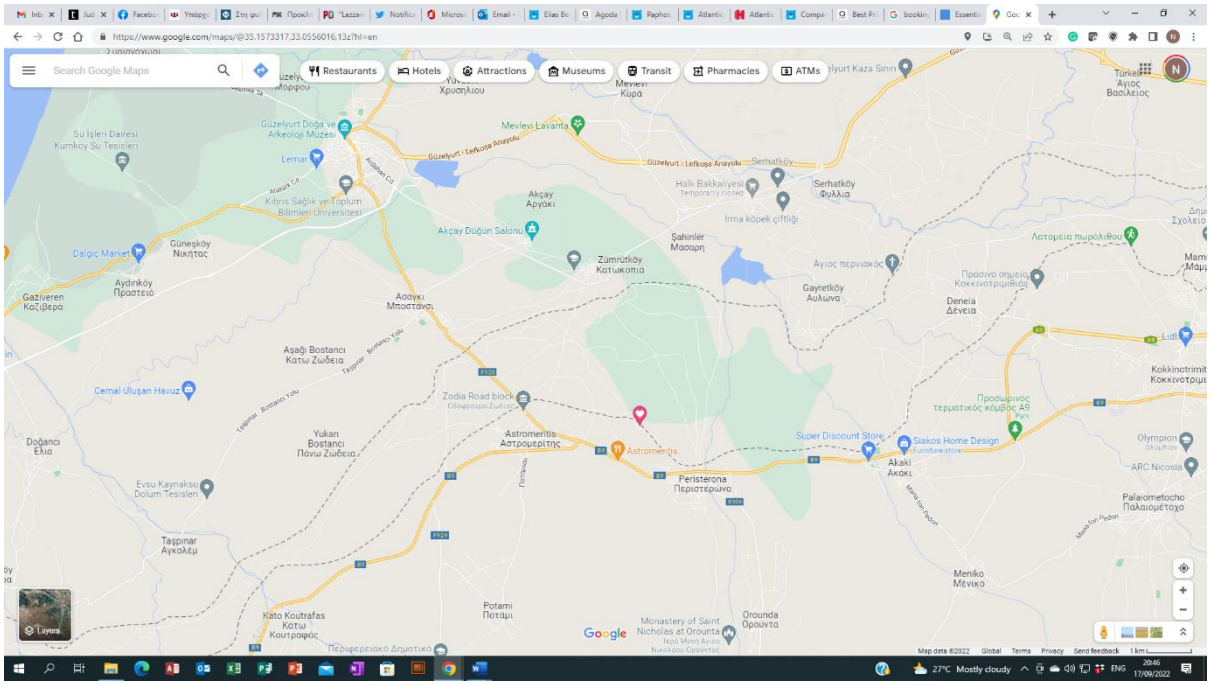
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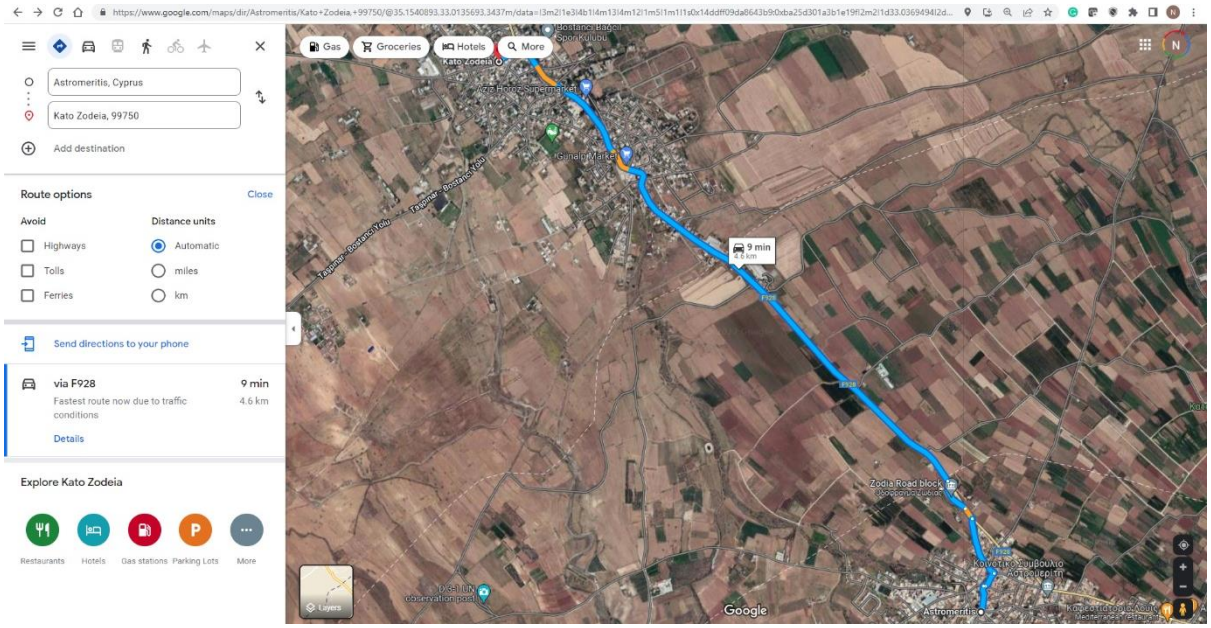
Akçay Düğün Salonu
Zümrütköy
Şahinler
Serhatköy
Gayretköy
Denela
Zodia Road block
Astromeritis
Peristerona
Super Discount Store
Slakos Home Design
Akaki
Olympion
ARC Nicosia
Palaiometocho
Meniko
Orounda
Potami
Kato Koutrafas
Taşpınar
Doğancı
Cemal Uluşan Havuz
Yukarı Bostancı
Aşağı Bostancı
Gaziveren
Dalgıç Market
Güneşköy
Aydınköy
Google


Astromeritis, Cyprus
Kato Zodeia, 99750
Add destination
Route options
Close
Avoid
Distance units
Highways
Automatic
Tolls
miles
Ferries
km
Send directions to your phone
via F928
9 min
Fastest route now due to traffic conditions
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Details
Explore Kato Zodeia
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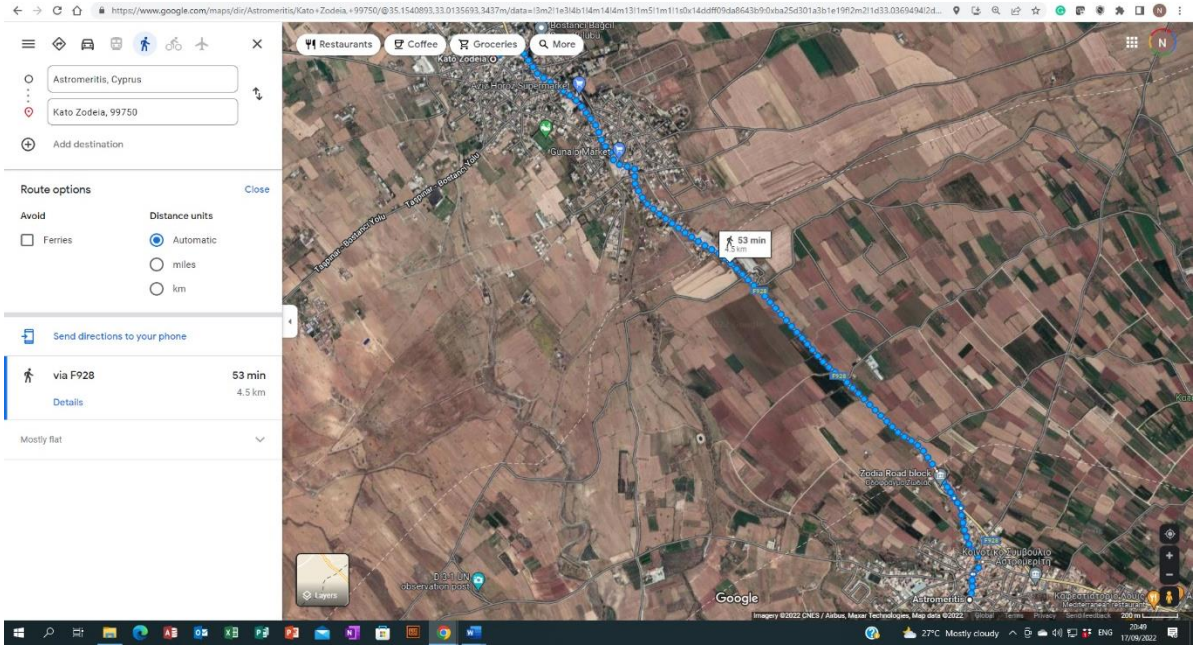
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Details
Mostly flat
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Coffee
Groceries
More
53 min
Zodia Road block
Astromeritis
Google

4. Pushbacks in Cyprus images

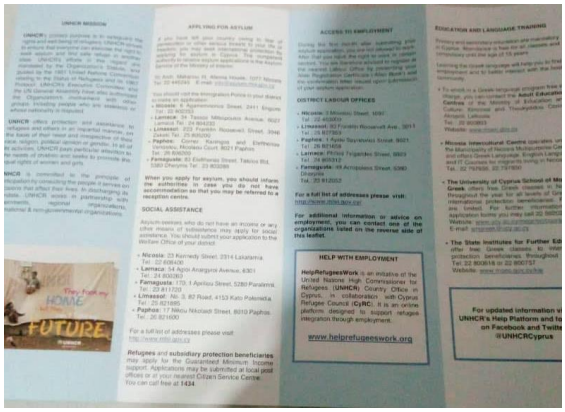
The Cyprus SRR (**S**earch and **R**escue **R**egion) coincides with the Nicosia FIR as shown in the diagram below:

This diagram offers an overview of the neighbouring SRRs:

‘Anamnisis’ is the boat rented by the RoC to send back to Beirut the asylum-seekers. Stationed at the marina of Larnaca is regularly used for these purposes.

5. The case of Mary

does not recall being informed about data use and EURODAC

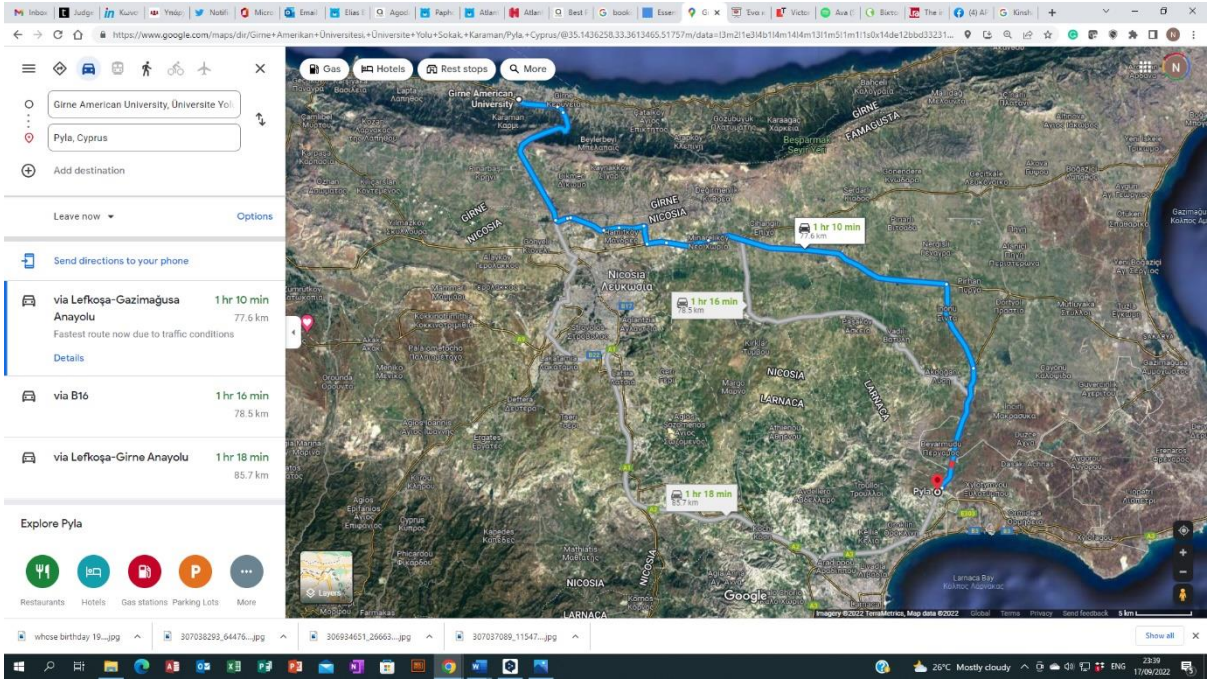


[Standard leaflet given to asylum-seekers. Picture of the leaflet given by Mary

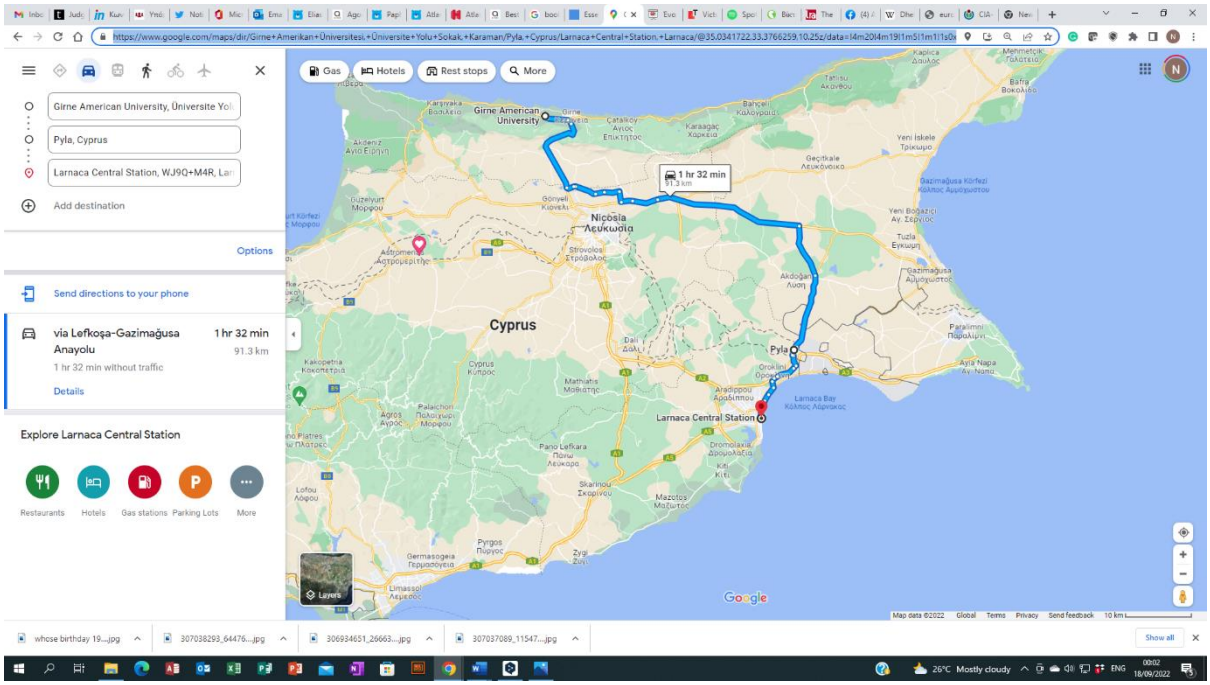
Picture of 'Ambazonian Boys'[26]

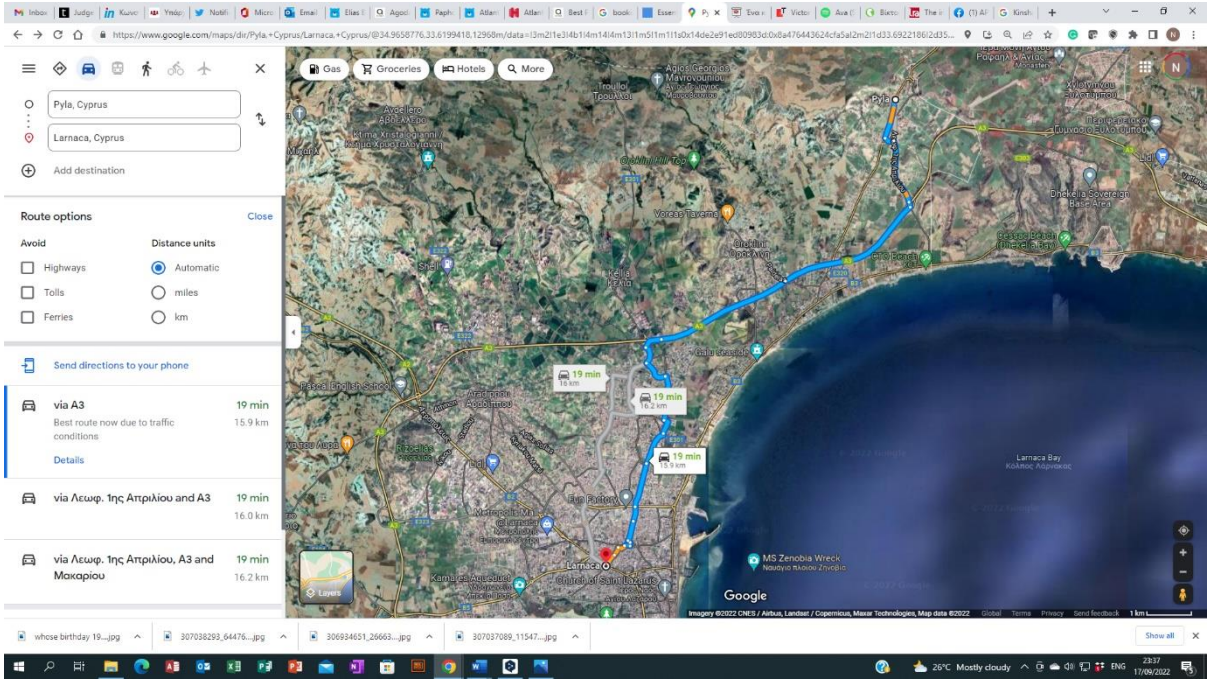
[26] "Cameroon Separatist Fighters, Ambazonian Boys Take Over Border Communities, Screen Nigerians*", Sahara Reporters*, New York, 20 October 2021.

6. African women on the move

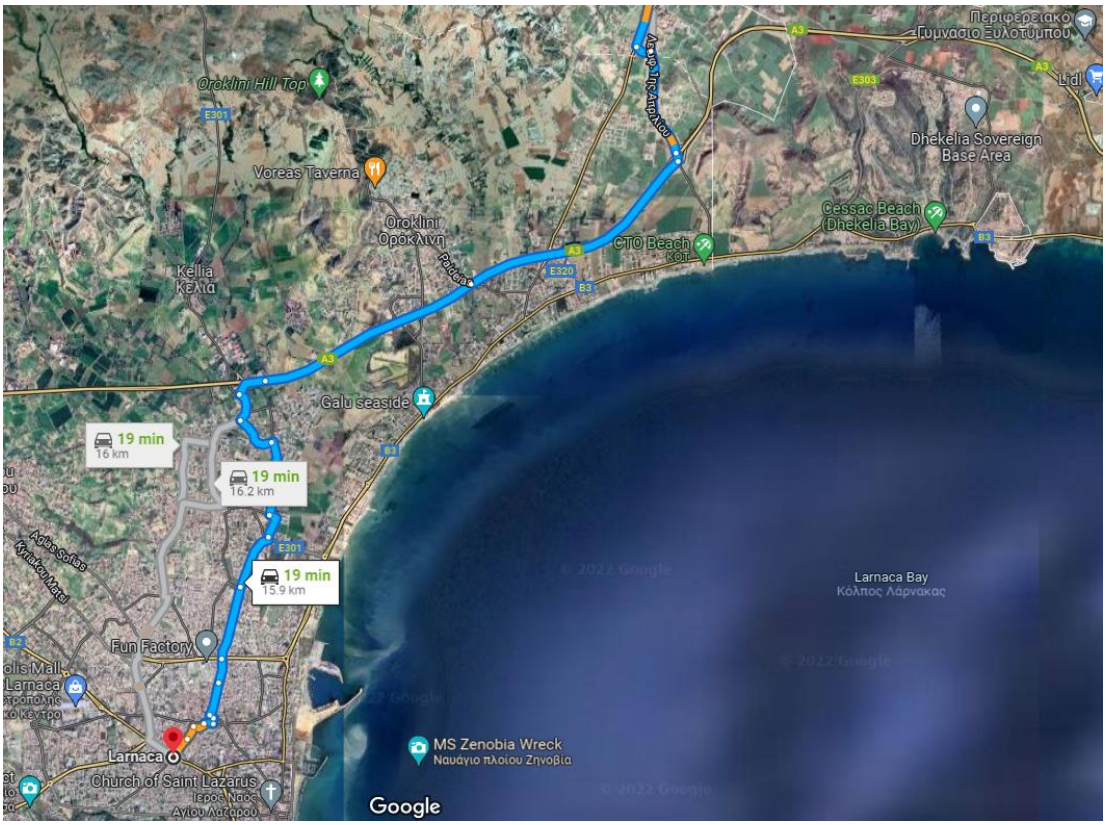


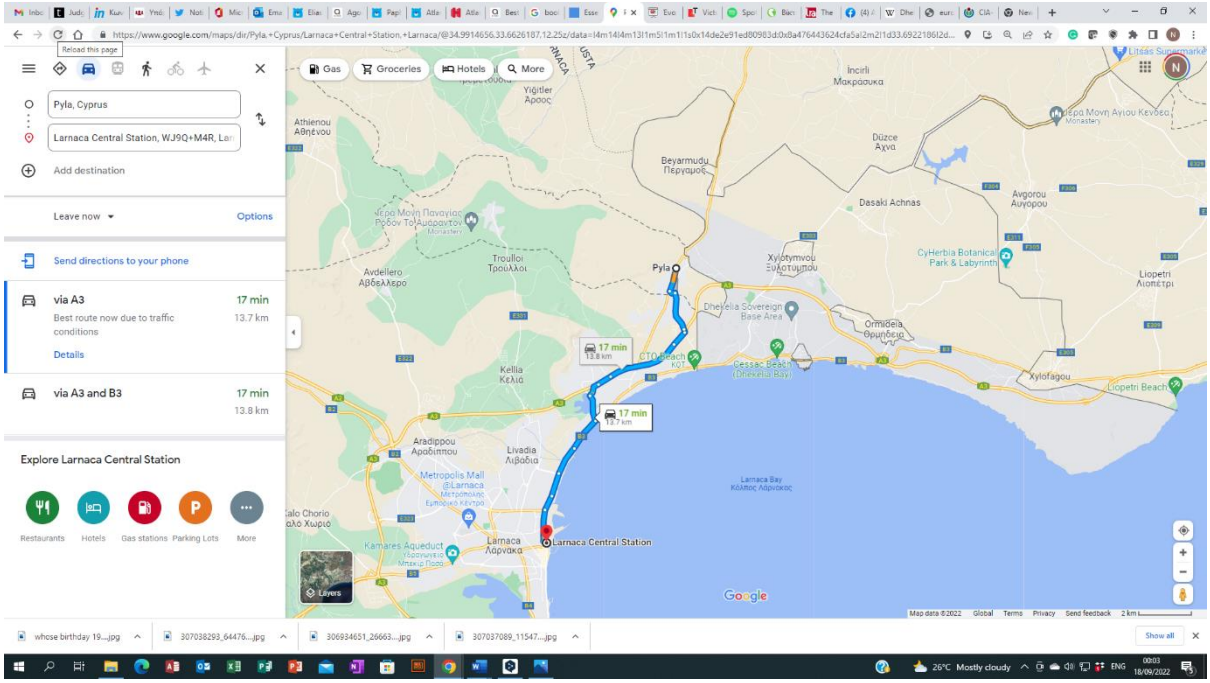
This is the direct route using google maps described by Florence from Kyrenia to Laranca.



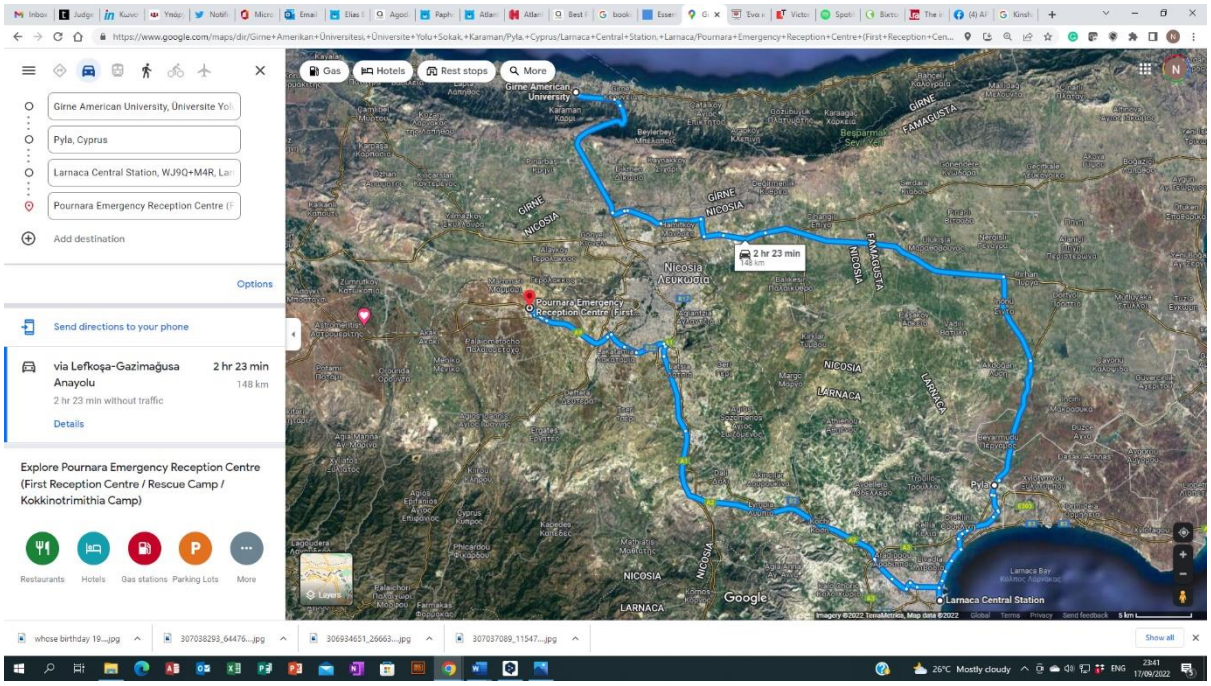


Another view from google maps:

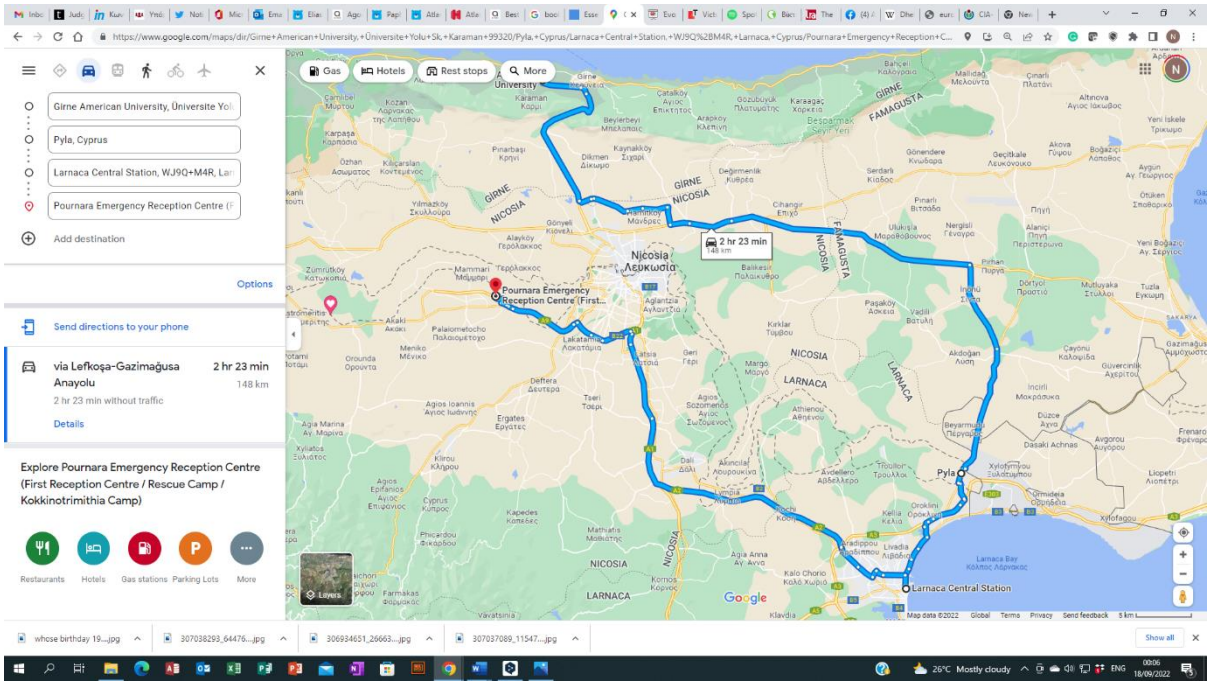




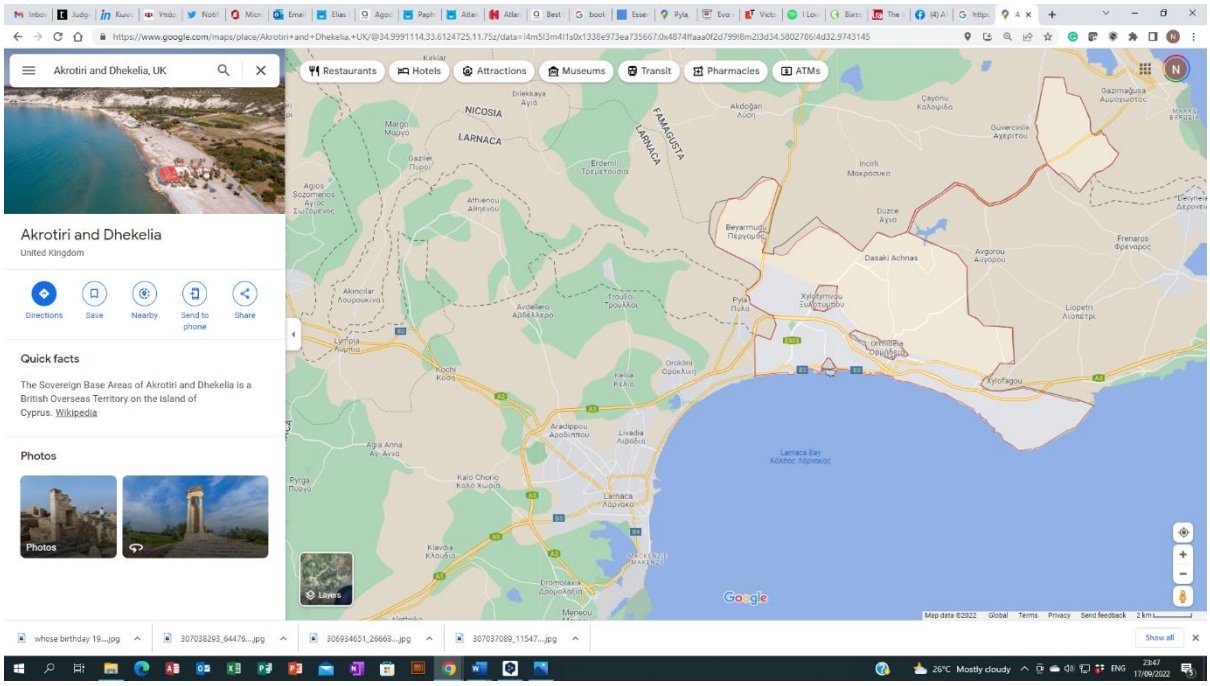
Using google maps we can see the route taken by ***** from the mixed village of Pyla to the coastal city of Larnaca. Pyla which in the buffer zone and is cohabited by both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots that has received considerable research interest (Papadakis 1997; Sanliturk, 2019; 2022). Seen as "an exceptional village whereby its hybrid status derived from its mixed community": The geographical location of the village is such that it was "confined to what became known as the "security zone" following a Declaration from 30 July 1974 (UN Rep. S/11398)" which became a territory that was "put under the sole mandate of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) which gained surveillance and control powers over the area" (Sanliturk, 2019, 683). Pyla is considered to be one of a key boundary in the buffer zone that is porous.



Route charted from [Google Maps]



From [google maps]



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhekelia_Cantonment#/media/File:CIA-Dhekelia.png

7. Mobilisation of migrants and refugees following the violent attack on African woman in Larnaka

After African mother violently attacked caught on video that went viral there was a demonstration outside the Larnaca Police, 17 July 2022, where migrants and Cypriots demonstrators demanded: “We demand Justice! Cyprus welcomes refugees! Black lives matter!”

“Police probe ‘racist’ attack on woman in Larnaca”, FM 14 July 2022

In the northern Nicosia: One of the notorious colleges which offers ‘students visas’

Picture by Nicos Trimikliniotis, 15 September 2022

8. Delivery Wolt workers strike action

Pictures from delivery workers strike action, 21 December 2022, picture by Nicos Trimikliniotis]

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