



# Greece

**Population**

10,710,000

**Area**

132,049 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital**

Athens

**3 largest cities**

Athens (664,000)

Thessaloniki (325,000)

Patra (214,000)

**Neighboring countries**

Albania, Bulgaria, North  
Macedonia, Turkey

1. Migration history
2. Estimated number of people with a migration background with dementia
3. National dementia plan
4. National dementia care and treatment guidelines
5. Services and information for people with a migration background with dementia
6. Professional qualification and people with a migration background in healthcare
7. Support for family caregivers
8. References



## 1. Migration history

From the 1830s to the end of the 20th century, Greece was characterised by the emigration of large parts of the population. Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries and after the Second World War, two waves of large-scale immigration occurred. From 1890 to 1914 approximately one-sixth of the Greek population left the country. Between 1950 and 1974 another million people emigrated. In the years 1974 to 1985 about half of the emigrants of the post-war period returned [1]. During the 1980s, Greece developed into a transit country for people from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa [2]. The collapse of the Central and Eastern European political systems in 1989 led to a significant increase in immigration. Between 1990 and 2005, Greece evolved from an emigration country to an immigration country. In the early 1990s, mainly people from Albania came to Greece. After 1995, many immigrants arrived from other Balkan states, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, and India. In 2001, the foreign population already comprised of 762,200 people. Almost two-thirds of the people in this population came from Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania (more than

half from Albania) [1]. From 2007 onwards, the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers (from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.) entering Greece via the Aegean Sea and the land route has also increased significantly [2]. Since the Syrian conflict in 2011, transit migration to Greece has increased significantly. In 2015 alone, around 860,000 people from North Africa or via Turkey reached Greece, most of them by sea. In 2019 (until 20 October), more than 53,000 people arrived in Greece by land or sea. The largest groups of people came from Afghanistan (13,800) and Syria (9,100). Most of them subsequently migrated to Western or Northern Europe [3]. In 2013, people from Albania (574,800), Bulgaria (56,000), Romania (38,600), Georgia (37,900), and Pakistan (24,500) represented the largest migrant groups [4]. Between 2010 and 2019, the migrant population (born abroad) declined from 1.3 to 1.2 million and its proportion in the total population fell from 12.1 to 11.6%. Previously, it had doubled compared to 1990 (618,100/6%) [5]. Since 2010, the net migration rate has been negative. Currently, the rate is -1.5 [6].



## 2. Estimated number of people with a migration background with dementia

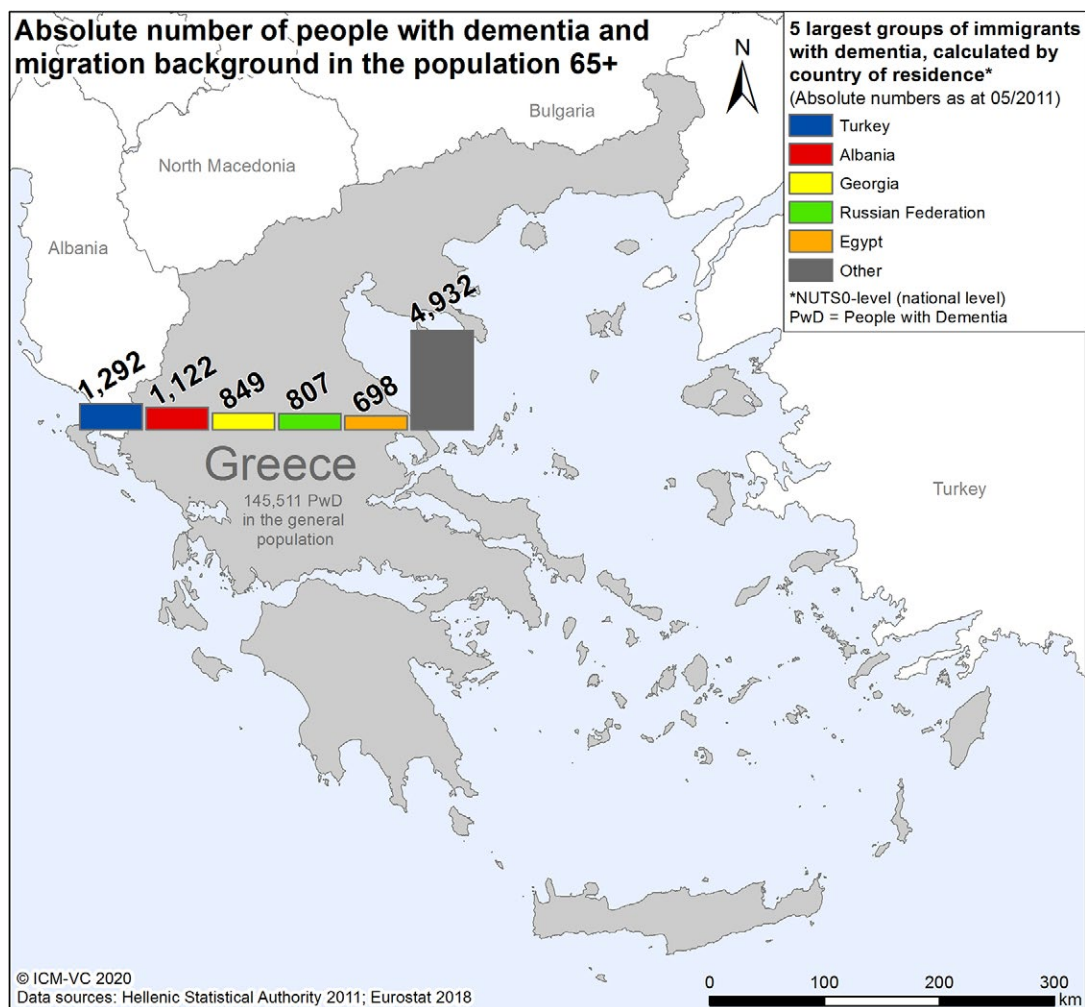


Fig. 3.7.12.1: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+ (Greece – Nation)

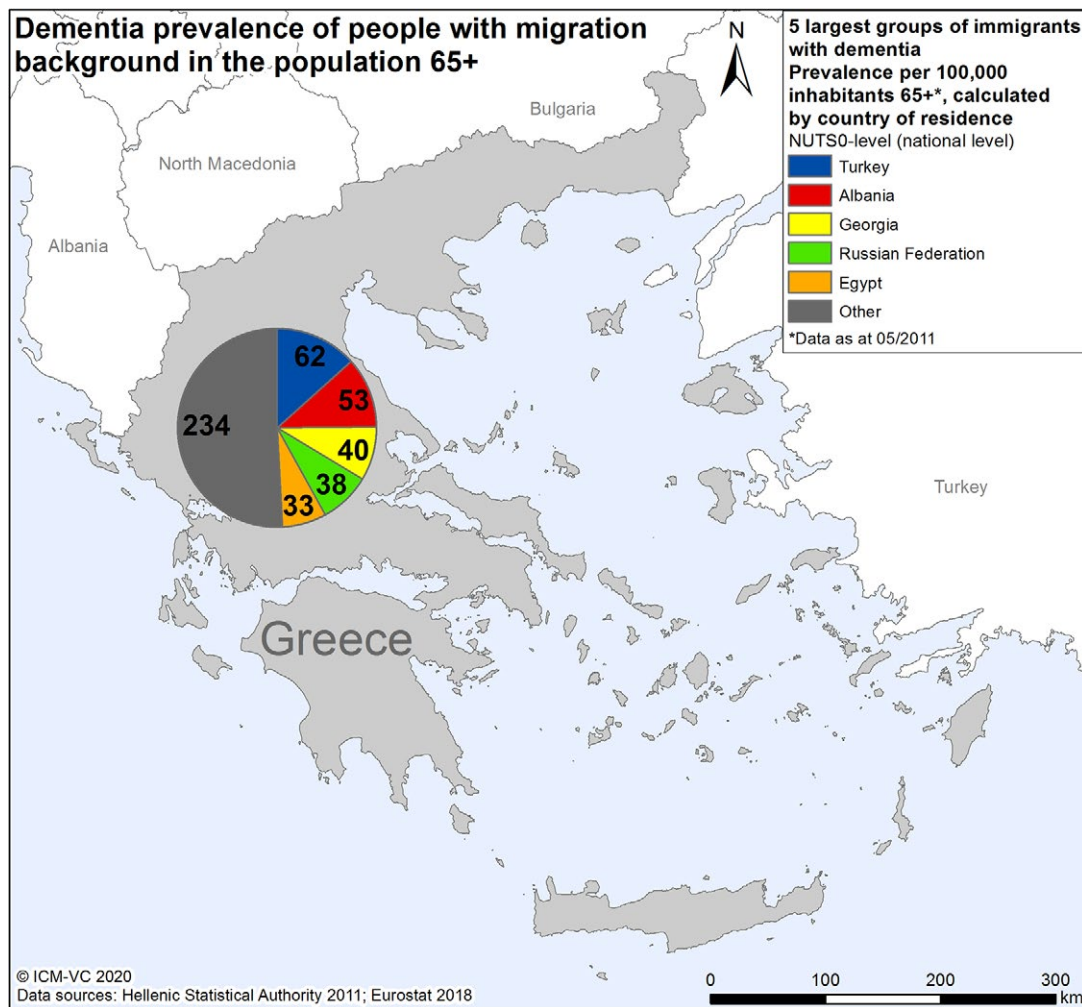


Fig. 3.7.12.2: Prevalence of PwM with dementia among the population aged 65+ (Greece – Nation)



**Tab. 23: PwM with dementia: Absolute numbers, prevalence among PwM aged 65+, and prevalence among overall population aged 65+ (Greece – Nation)**

NUTS	Total	GR	1. largest group	2. largest group	3. largest group	4. largest group	5. largest group	Other
Absolute Numbers								
Greece	145,511	135,812	TR 1,292	AL 1,122	GE 849	RU 807	EG 698	4,931
Prevalence/10,000 inhabitants with migration background 65+								
Greece	10,352	-	TR 92	AL 80	GE 60	RU 57	EG 50	351
Prevalence/100,000 inhabitants 65+								
Greece	6,900	6,440	TR 61	AL 53	GE 40	RU 38	EG 33	83

Data source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011)

There are 140,600 PwM aged 65 or older. Of those, approx. 9,700 are estimated to exhibit some form of dementia. Figure 3.7.12.1 shows the most affected migrant groups presumably originate from Turkey (approx. 1,300), Albania (approx. 1,100), Georgia (approx. 900), the Russian Federation (approx. 800), and Egypt (approx. 700). The second graph highlights the number of PwM with dementia in Greece

per 100,000 inhabitants aged 65 or older (figure 3.7.12.2). Table 23 displays the values depicted in the maps on the national level. The following maps show the distribution of non-migrants with dementia and PwM with dementia from Turkey, Albania, Georgia, the Russian Federation, and Egypt throughout the country in the NUTS2 regions (figures 3.7.12.3 – 3.7.12.8).

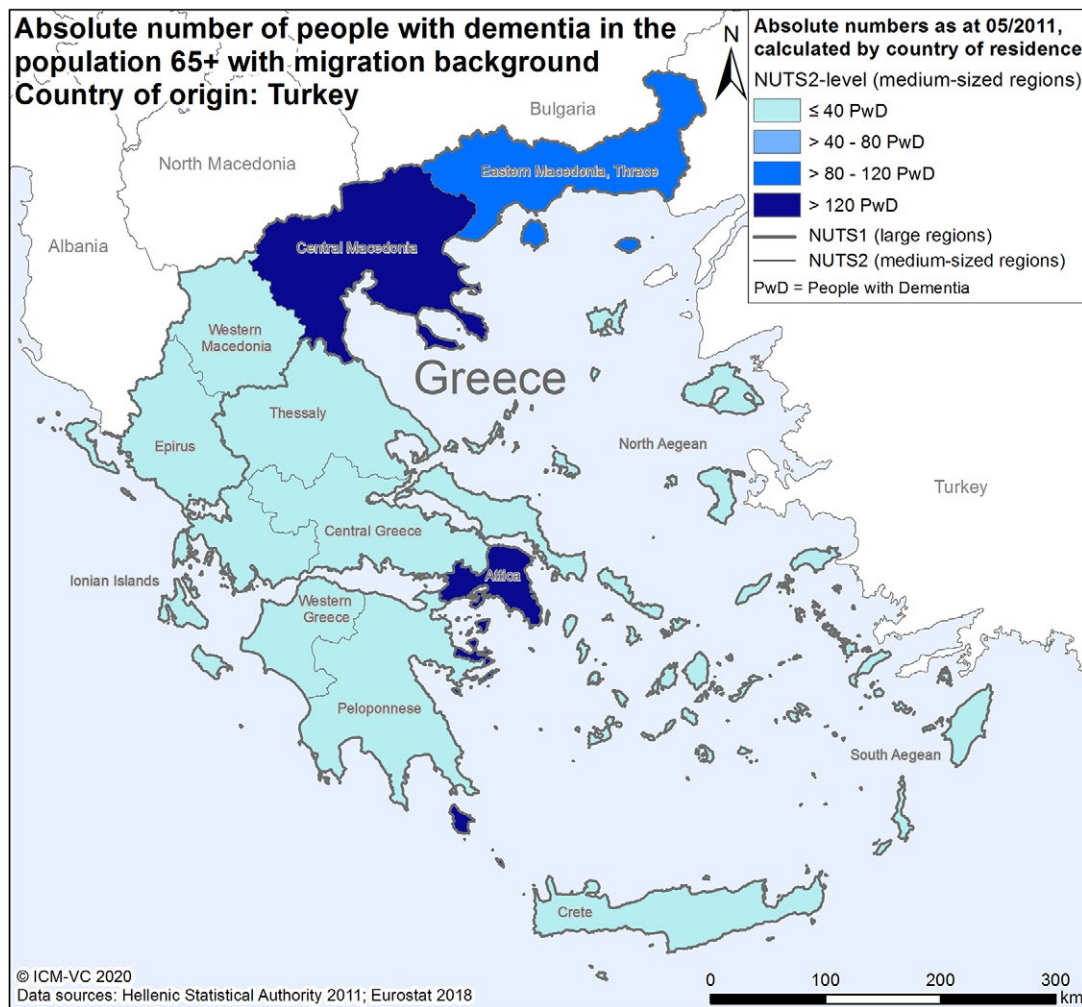


Fig. 3.7.12.3: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+. Country of origin: Turkey (Greece – NUTS2)



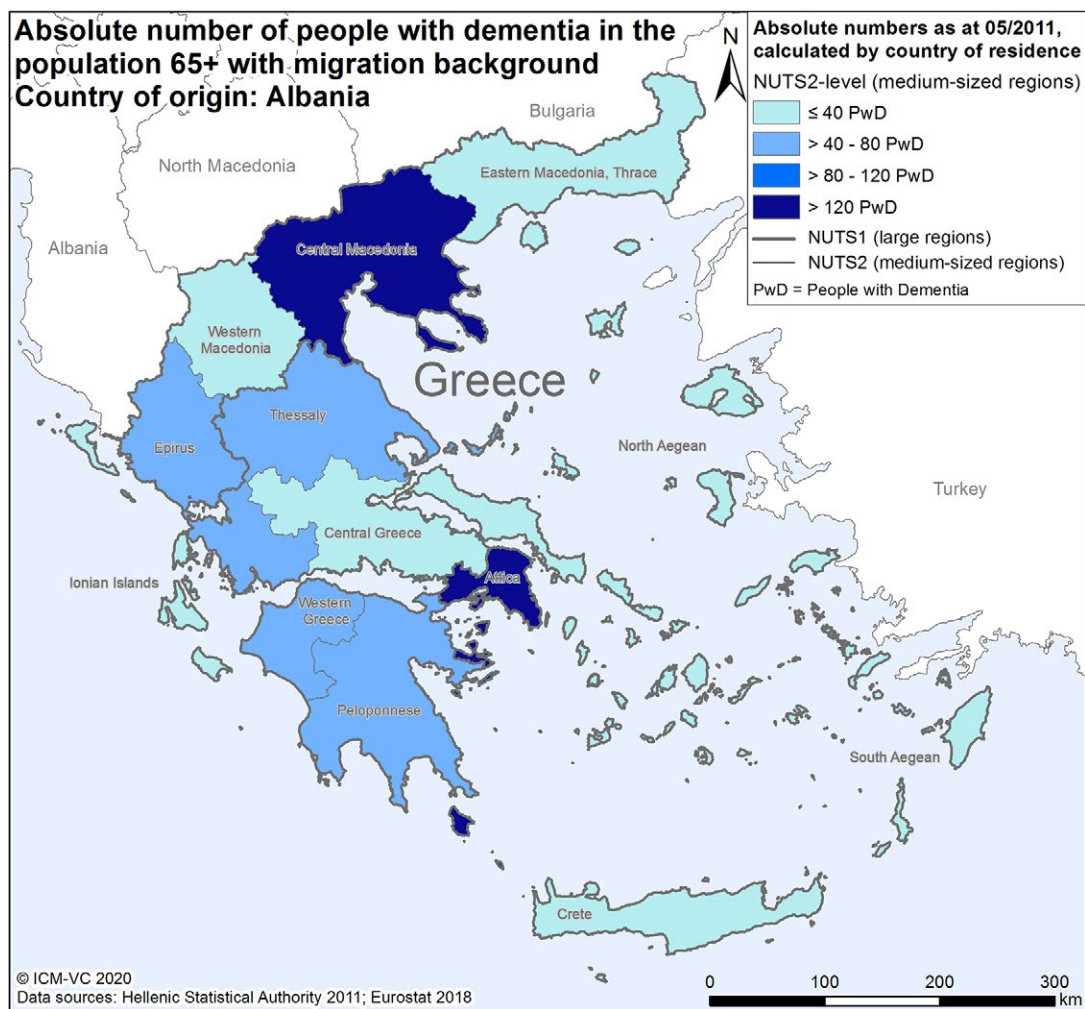


Fig. 3.7.12.4: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+.  
 Country of origin: Albania (Greece – NUTS2)

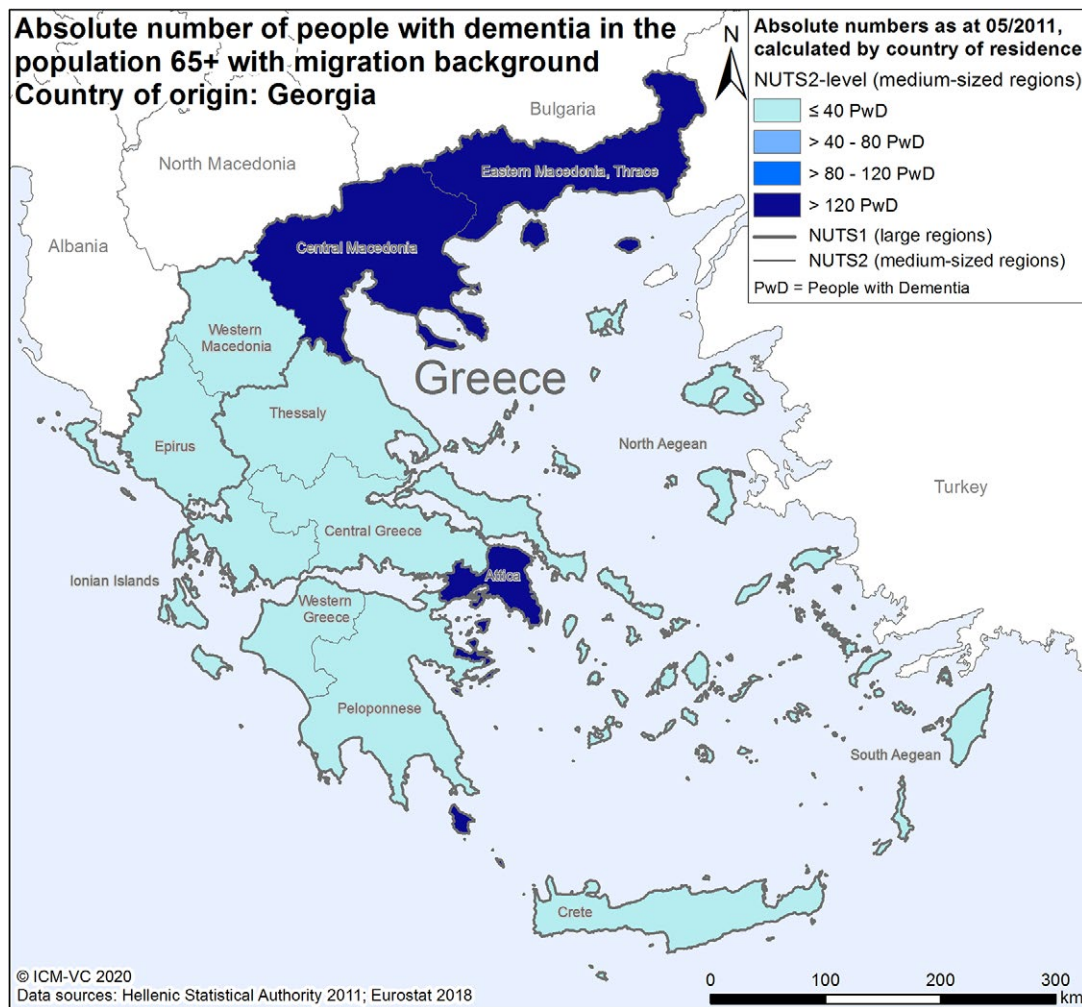


Fig. 3.7.12.5: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+.  
Country of origin: Georgia (Greece – NUTS2)



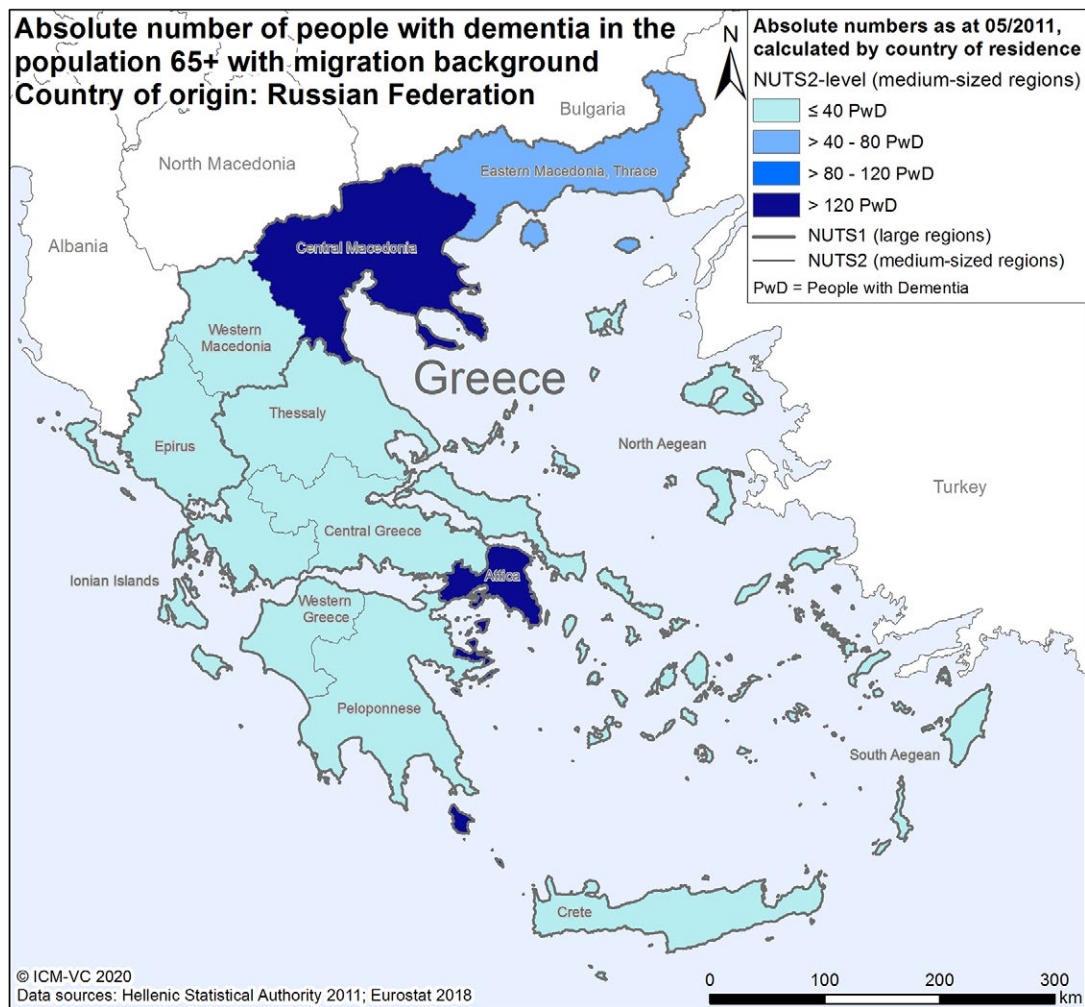


Fig. 3.7.12.6: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+.  
 Country of origin: The Russian Federation (Greece – NUTS2)

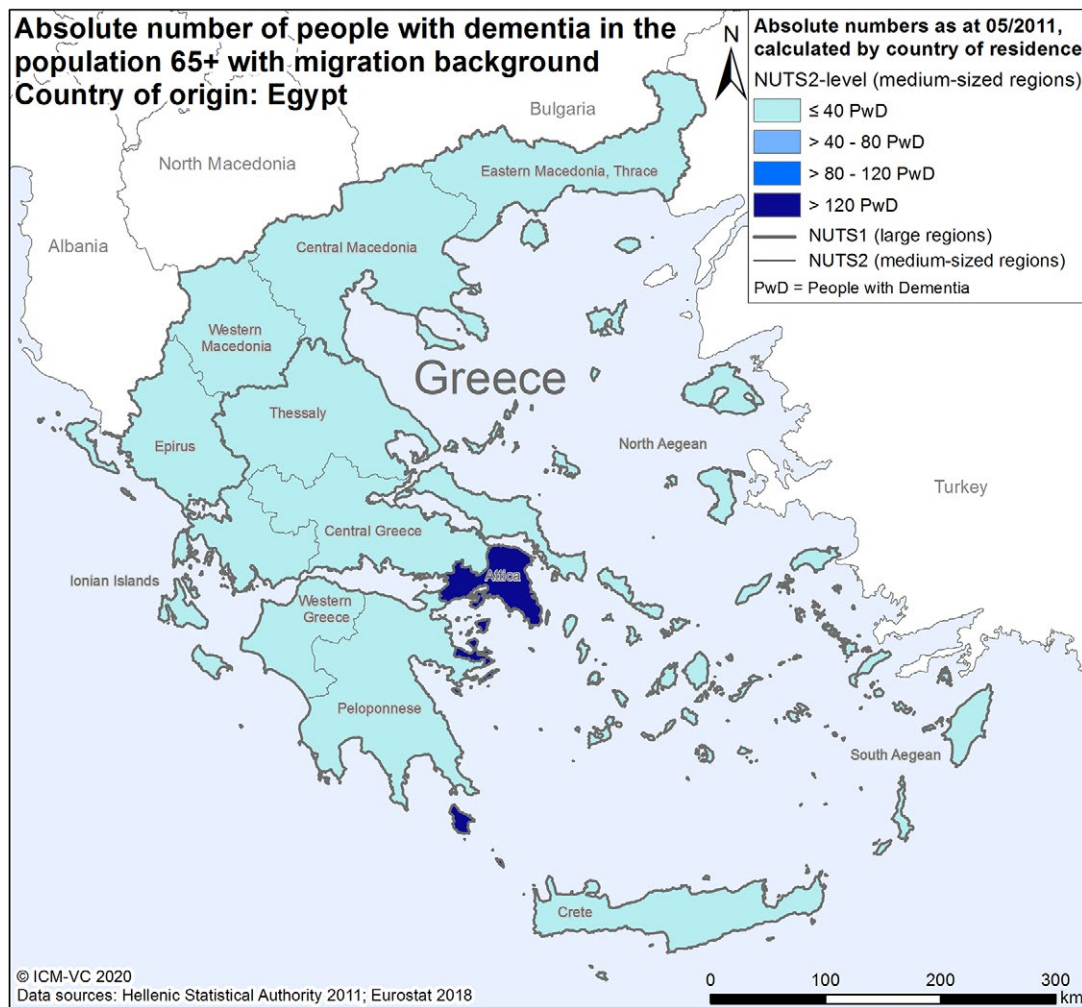


Fig. 3.7.12.7: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+. Country of origin: Egypt (Greece – NUTS2)

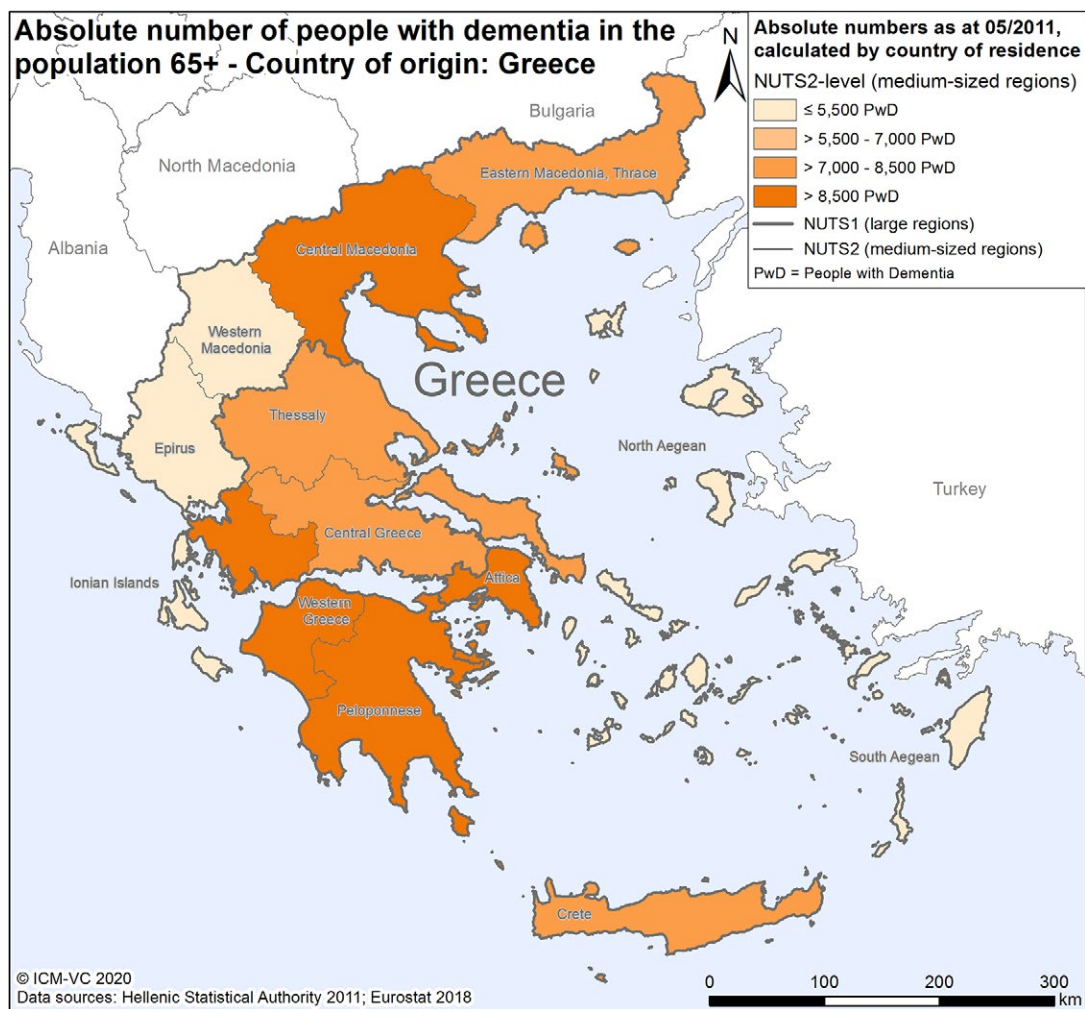


Fig. 3.7.12.8: Absolute number of people with dementia aged 65+.  
Country of origin: Greece (Greece – NUTS2)

The graphics below highlight which immigrant groups are estimated to be the most affected at the NUTS2 level. The first map illustrates the absolute numbers of PwM with dementia in the NUTS2 regions (figure 3.7.12.9). The

second graph shows the number of PwM with dementia per 100,000 inhabitants aged 65 or older in the NUTS2 regions (figure 3.7.12.10). The values from the NUTS2 level can be found in table 24 [7-9].

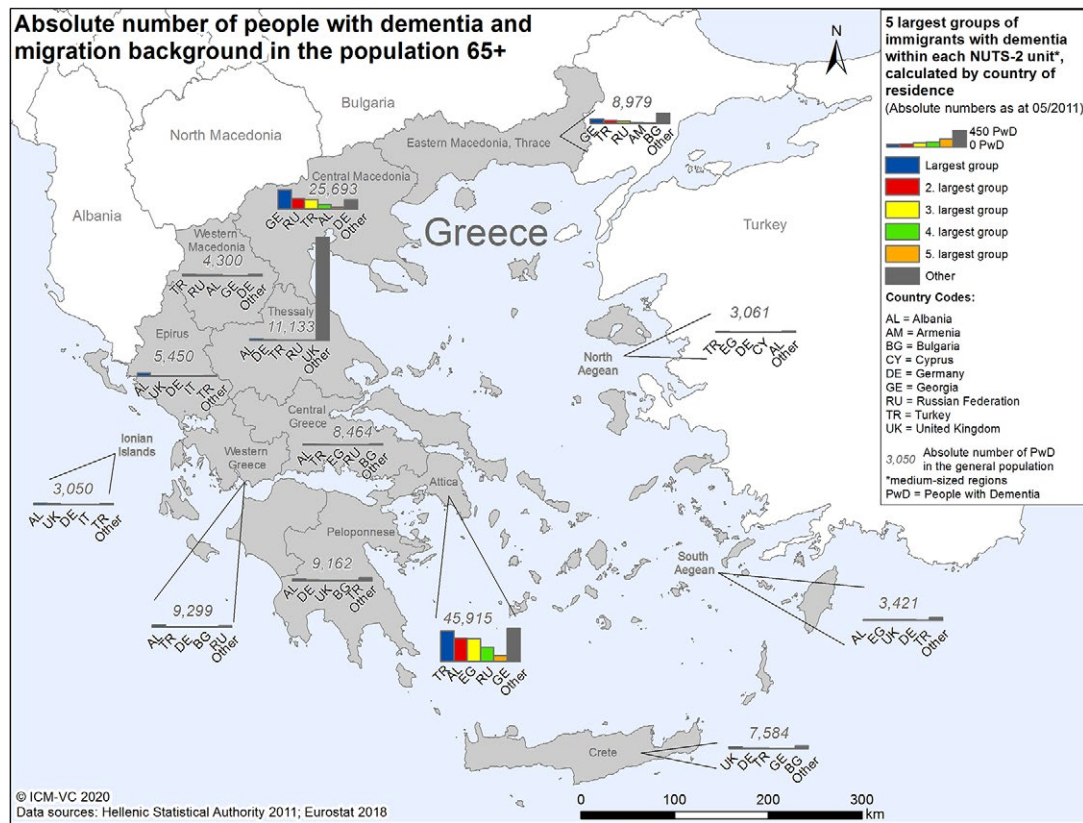


Fig. 3.7.12.9: Absolute number of PwM with dementia aged 65+ (Greece – NUTS2)



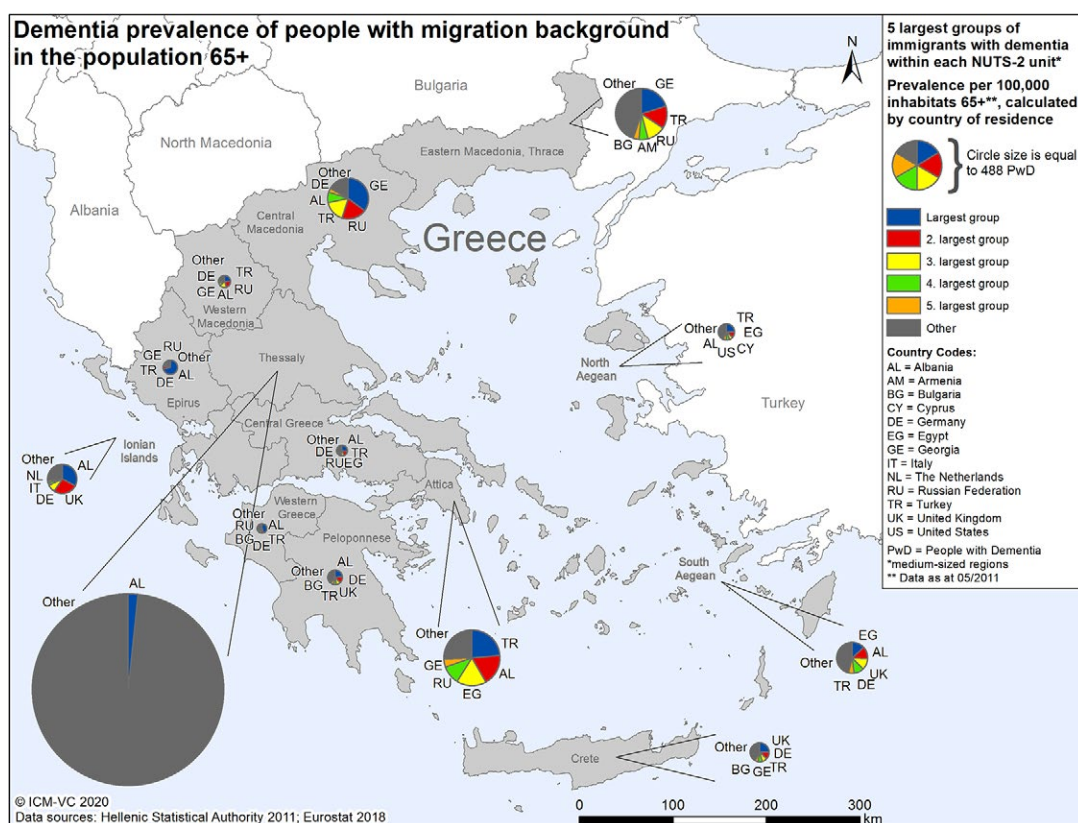


Fig. 3.7.12.10: Prevalence of PwM with dementia aged 65+ (Greece – NUTS2)

Tab. 24: PwM with dementia: Absolute numbers, prevalence among PwM aged 65+, and prevalence among overall population aged 65+ (Greece – NUTS 2)

NUTS	Total	GR	1. largest group	2. largest group	3. largest group	4. largest group	5. largest group	Other
Absolute Numbers								
Attica	45,915	42,392	TR 828	AL 637	EG 611	RU 383	GE 166	898
North Aegean	3,061	2,991	TR 18	EG 8	CY 5	US 5	AL 5	29
South Aegean	3,421	3,274	EG 19	AL 19	UK 18	DE 16	TR 8	67
Crete	7,584	7,383	UK 49	DE 25	TR 17	GE 15	BG 10	85
Eastern Macedonia, Thrace	8,979	8,344	GE 126	TR 91	RU 74	AM 35	BG 24	285
Central Macedonia	25,693	24,211	GE 522	RU 291	TR 248	AL 125	DE 48	248
Western Macedonia	4,300	4,228	TR 17	RU 15	AL 14	GE 6	<5	16



## Greece

NUTS	Total	GR	1. largest group	2. largest group	3. largest group	4. largest group	5. largest group	Other group
Epirus	5,450	5,342	AL 77	DE 7	<5	<5	<5	16
Thessaly	11,133	8,237	AL 48	DE 17	TR 14	RU 12	UK 10	2,795
Ionian Islands	3,050	2,927	AL 40	UK 33	DE 10	<5	<5	34
Western Greece	9,299	9,173	AL 57	TR 11	DE 9	BG 6	RU 6	37
Central Greece	8,464	8,337	AL 34	TR 21	EG 12	RU 9	DE 8	43
Peloponnese	9,162	8,972	AL 45	DE 28	UK 17	TR 12	BG 12	76
Prevalence/10,000 inhabitants with migration background 65+								
Attica	8,992	-	TR 162	AL 125	EG 120	RU 75	GE 32	176
North Aegean	29,985	-	TR 172	EG 82	CY 49	US 47	AL 46	4,294
South Aegean	16,003	-	EG 89	AL 88	UK 83	DE 73	TR 39	318
Crete	26,054	-	UK 168	DE 87	TR 59	GE 50	BG 36	290
Eastern Macedonia, Thrace	9,765	-	GE 137	TR 99	RU 81	AM 38	BG 26	309
Central Macedonia	11,967	-	GE 243	RU 136	TR 116	AL 58	DE 22	115
Western Macedonia	41,035	-	TR 164	RU 144	AL 130	GE 54	DE 36	162
Epirus	34,867	-	AL 492	DE 44	TR 22	GE 19	RU 15	98
Thessaly	2,653	-	AL 11	DE 4	TR 3	RU 3	UK 2	667
Ionian Islands	17,163	-	AL 226	UK 186	DE 57	IT 19	NL 17	185
Western Greece	51,010	-	AL 312	TR 61	DE 51	BG 34	RU 33	199
Central Greece	46,023	-	AL 183	TR 112	EG 65	RU 47	DE 44	239
Peloponnese	33,257	-	AL 163	DE 102	UK 63	TR 44	BG 42	276





NUTS	Total	GR	1. largest group	2. largest group	3. largest group	4. largest group	5. largest group	Other
Prevalence/100,000 inhabitants 65+								
Attica	6,900	6,371	TR 124	AL 96	EG 92	RU 58	GE 25	122
North Aegean	6,900	6,741	TR 40	EG 19	CY 11	US 11	AL 11	57
South Aegean	6,900	6,602	EG 39	AL 38	UK 36	DE 31	TR 17	126
Crete	6,900	6,717	UK 45	DE 23	TR 16	GE 13	BG 10	57
Eastern Macedonia, Thrace	6,900	6,412	GE 97	TR 70	RU 57	AM 27	BG 18	51
Central Macedonia	6,900	6,502	GE 140	RU 78	TR 67	AL 34	DE 13	58
Western Macedonia	6,900	6,784	TR 28	RU 24	AL 22	GE 9	DE 6	23
Epirus	6,900	6,763	AL 97	DE 9	TR 4	GE 4	RU 3	14
Thessaly	6,900	5,105	AL 30	DE 10	TR 9	RU 7	UK 6	23
Ionian Islands	6,900	6,623	AL 91	UK 75	DE 23	IT 8	NL 7	63
Western Greece	6,900	6,807	AL 42	TR 8	DE 7	BG 5	RU 4	21
Central Greece	6,900	6,797	AL 27	TR 17	EG 10	RU 7	DE 7	28
Peloponnese	6,900	6,757	AL 34	DE 21	UK 13	TR 9	BG 9	49

Note: Absolute numbers < 5 are not given for data protection reasons.

Data source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011)

### 3. National dementia plan

The 'National Action Plan for Dementia - Alzheimer's Disease' from 2017 has a scope of 93 pages and contains four general chapters: 1. 'Dementia World-wide (topics: epidemiology and risk factors of dementia, types of dementia, international policy for treating dementia, and rights of people with dementia), 2. 'Dementia in Greece' (research and education, economic dimensions, and health and so-

cial care), 3. 'Strategic Planning' (vision, principles, and aims of the national action plan), and 4. 'Axes and Actions of the National Plan (registration and classification of people with dementia in Greece, prevention, support of caregivers of people with dementia, and treatment of dementia). In none of these chapters a reference is made to the topic of migration [10].



### 4. National dementia care and treatment guidelines

According to an expert from the School of Psychology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece currently has no national treatment guidelines. This expert stated that clinicians treat dementia primarily with medication, with a few centres (Hellenic Alzheimer's Association, Athens Alzheimer's Association) and individual practitioners providing

cognitive enhancement/rehabilitation [11].

The following parts on services and information for PwM with dementia, professional care and support for family caregivers are based on a conducted interview and reflect the experience and opinion of the expert. A selection bias in information and a discrepancy to results from the previous sections might ensue.

### 5. Services and information for people with a migration background with dementia

According to the expert, migrants are not seen as a vulnerable group solely by virtue of being migrants. The Greek healthcare system sees people as vulnerable based on their individual characteristics such as age or physical disability, rather than only ethno-cultural background. Dementia and migration is not an important topic in Greece on a state level. No specialised services available for PwM with dementia are provided by the government either on a national or regional level. This is not surprising as a) also other topics regarding migration are not a focal point either, e.g. health and migration or education and migration and b) the earliest services for dementia were implemented at the beginning of the millennium and there are just not a lot of dementia services. Only in the latest years, there was a mental health reform where units for dementia multiplied. In addition, there was an effort to connect ambulatory memory services with day-care centres for the elderly to detect early symptoms of dementia. In practice, the healthcare professionals try to use the MMSE, but there are no culturally adapted diagnostic tools for people with a different cultural background. The expert reported that generally speaking, 'there is no specific provision for a culturally sensitive or a migrant-friendly healthcare

here in Greece'. The expert also stated that there are no current or planned measures to provide care and support for PwM with dementia. If a migrant person regardless of dementia, goes to a clinic or any other service there will not even be specialised interpreters as they are expected to provide translation by themselves. The expert noted that if there is some support offered to PwM or to refugees in general, then it is by individual initiatives or NGOs, e.g. Caritas tried to set up a service for refugees with dementia. However, since there was no demand from this group, as refugees are a younger population, this service folded. There seems to be a low demand for such services. The expert assumed that people from countries that do not offer dementia-specific services do not ask for these services since they are not familiar with their existence. In addition, if one does not speak Greek or at least English, it will be a further hindrance in getting help. Also, if organisations that work with migrants come across PwM who might possibly have dementia, they have to rely on their own resources to find solutions and provide help. Another interesting point the expert mentioned is that the private sector offers healthcare services, and if someone is able to pay for them, one will be taken care of no matter the ethnic background.



## 6. Professional qualification and people with a migration background in healthcare

It seems that culturally sensitive care is not part of the professional qualifications, and there are no professional training possibilities in intercultural care available as per the expert. So, there is a significant need for awareness and training regarding culturally sensitive care. The expert assumed there is a high proportion of (professional) caregivers in outpatient care. There are females with a migration background, employed by certain agencies, who work in the private sector as caretakers of people with dementia. Usually, these wom-

en originate from Ukraine, Georgia or African countries, and they live in the house of the person with dementia as domestic staff. Mostly they are not professionally trained and work in Greece irregularly. Since they work the whole day and only have a couple of hours off on Sundays, the impact of this work on their mental health is very serious. Regarding inpatient care the expert mentioned that there seem to be suggestions about training people with a refugee background to work in inpatient care.

## 7. Support for family caregivers

It was noted by the expert that since absolutely no specialised services are provided by the state, the family, religious communities, and migrant organisations play a crucial role in support. These networks can, to some extent, fill the gap between needs and services for PwM with dementia.

The expert stated that existing services and in-

formation resources are not adequately helpful for family caregivers of PwM since their unique needs are not addressed by them. Furthermore, information is not even available in different languages. So, the expert pointed out a very high need for specialised services providing support and information to family caregivers.

## 8. References

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