



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
General Secretariat for  
Media & Communication

# Refugee Crisis Fact sheet

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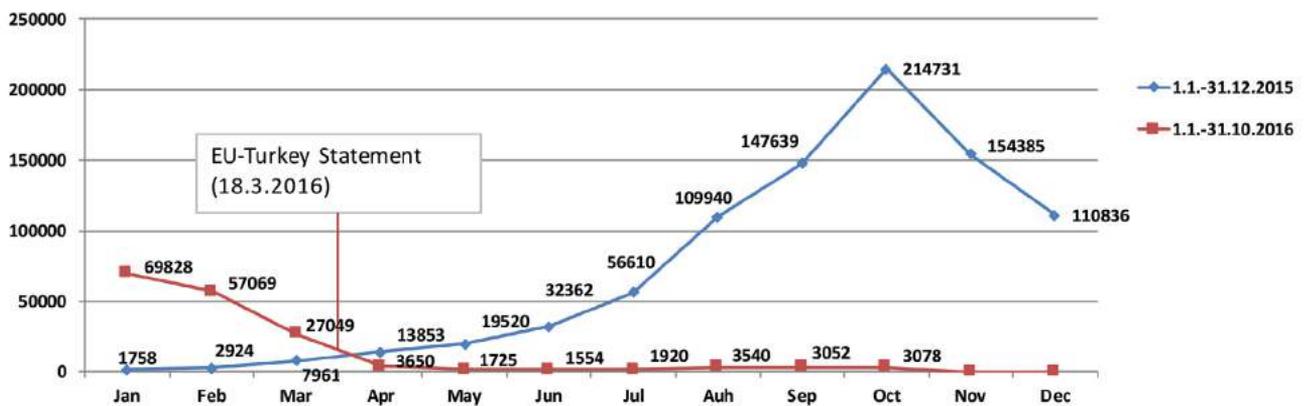
January 2017

# GREECE: THE REFUGEE & MIGRANT CRISIS IN NUMBERS

## ARRIVALS

- **172,465 arrivals on Greek islands** (1.1.2016 - 31.10.2016)
- **872,519 arrivals** on Greek islands in 2015
- **2,810 arrivals through land borders** (1.1.2016 - 31.10.2016)
- **3,713 arrivals** through land borders in 2015
- **20,164 arrivals** after the EU-Turkey Statement (April – October 2016) – (18,519 on Greek islands and 1,645 through land borders)

## Sea arrivals per month (2015-2016)



## SEARCH AND RESCUE – SMUGGLERS' ARRESTS

**49,792 sea rescues** (1.1.2016 - 21.11.2016)

**108 persons have perished at sea and 10 are missing** (1.1.2016 - 21.11.2016)

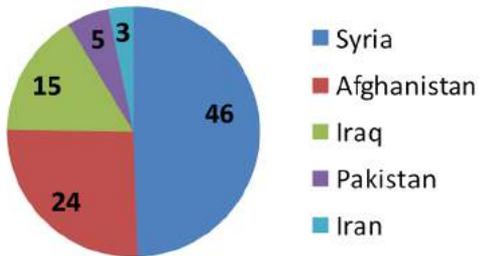
**272 persons have perished at sea and 152 missing in 2015**

**765 smugglers arrested** (1.1.2016 - 31.10.2016)

## INCOMING PERSONS PROFILE

- **46%** of those who have entered Greece through sea and land borders come from Syria, **24%** from Afghanistan, **15%** from Iraq, **5%** from Pakistan, **3%** from Iran (1.1.2016 – 31.10.2016)
- **64%** of incoming persons are **men** and **36%** are **women** (1.1.2016 – 31.10.2016)
- **24,5%** of incoming **men** and **31,9%** of incoming **women** are **below 18 years of age**

## Nationality of incoming persons (1.1.2016-31.10.2016)



## RESIDING IN GREECE

- **62,681** are temporarily residing in Greece, on the islands and the mainland (12.12.2016)
- **71,780** is the nominal capacity of the official hosting structures (12.12.2016)

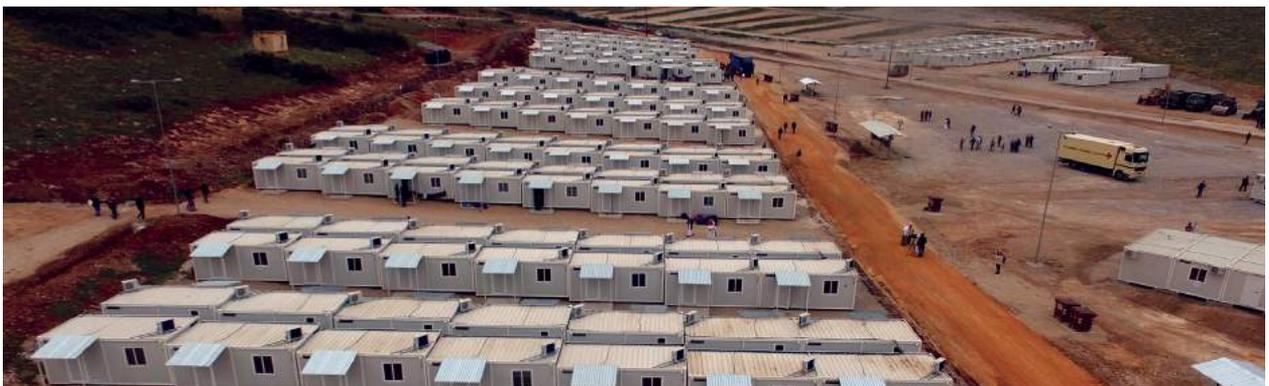
Sources: Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management, Ministry of Citizen Protection

## STRUCTURES & HOSTING FACILITIES

Greek authorities managed to handle the **unprecedented refugee flows in Greece** by creating, as quickly as possible, **hosting facilities** for refugees and migrants and closing, at the same time, unofficial and improper settlements. In a short time, refugees and migrants were transferred from parks and squares to **organized structures**, while **make-shift and inappropriate** camps at the northern border of the country, in Idomeni - where more than 10,000 people were staying in unsuitable living conditions - **were evacuated** by the Greek authorities, without use of force.

In addition to the **state-run structures**, which are **gradually being upgraded**, accommodation places and **hosting facilities are also run by the UNHCR** and **other NGOs** throughout the country.

Source: Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management



Hosting Facility at Larissa Koutsoxero, former "Efthimiopoulou Camp" (November, 2016).

Source: The Athens News Agency- Macedonian Press Agency (ANA - MPA).

## Shelters for unaccompanied minors

**Special attention** is given to the **unaccompanied minors**, the most vulnerable part of the refugee and migrant population coming to Greece:

- **Establishment of safe zones** in accommodation centers
- **47 shelters** are in operation throughout Greece with a **nominal capacity of 1,191 places**
- **New shelters** will be created shortly and **130 more accommodation places** will be available **in Athens** and **in Thessaloniki**, while **1,199 accommodation requests are still pending**

These shelters, which are **small-scale structures**, employ one social worker per 15 minors and one psychologist per 30 minors, while legal counseling, educational and recreational activities as well as 24hour care and security services are also provided.

The shelters operate under the supervision of the Greek state. Seven of them are directly run by the **National Center for Social Solidarity**, while the rest of the shelters are run by several **NGOs**. These specialized accommodation centers are **financed by the European Union**, as well as by **International Organizations (UNHCR, International Organization for Migration, UNICEF)**.

The children stay at the shelters until they are: relocated, reunited with members of their family in other EU countries, or integrated into the Greek society.

*Source: National Center for Social Solidarity*

## THE REFUGEE/ MIGRANT CRISIS & HEALTH

### Vaccination campaign for the refugee and migrant children

- The Greek Ministry of Health, together with the Greek Ministry of Migration Policy, has established and coordinates a **vaccination campaign for the refugee and migrant children** residing in Hosting Centers and other hosting facilities.
- The vaccination program is being implemented **in collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)**, based on decisions made by the **National Committee on Immunization** and with full commitment to the global goal of protecting the rights to education and health for all children living in Greece.
- Children's **vaccination** is a **precondition** for the **integration of Hosting Centers** into the **national education plan for schools** led by the Greek **Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs**.

- The **first phase of the vaccination schedule** was completed in **November 2016** with the support of UNICEF which had donated to the Ministry of Health 62,000 vaccines for the refugee and migrant children.

## Other programs for refugee health care and medical treatment

- Hellenic Center for Disease Control & Prevention (**HCDCP**)
  1. Syndromic/ epidemiological surveillance system in refugee and migrant health care units
  2. Diagnostic and treatment guidelines for health care services in Hosting Centers for Refugees/ Migrants
  3. Projects - **Awareness campaigns** led by HCDCP
- A 3.2 million euro program, funded through the IMF (Internal Security Fund -DG HOME's emergency assistance instrument), is operating in the Eastern Aegean islands, **in order to meet the public health system demands** (Hospitals, PEDY Units-National Primary Healthcare Network, EKAB-National First Aid Center) with staff of various specialties.
- **Declaration** for supporting adequate infant and child nutrition for the refugee/ migrant children in cooperation with UNICEF, on November 10, 2016.

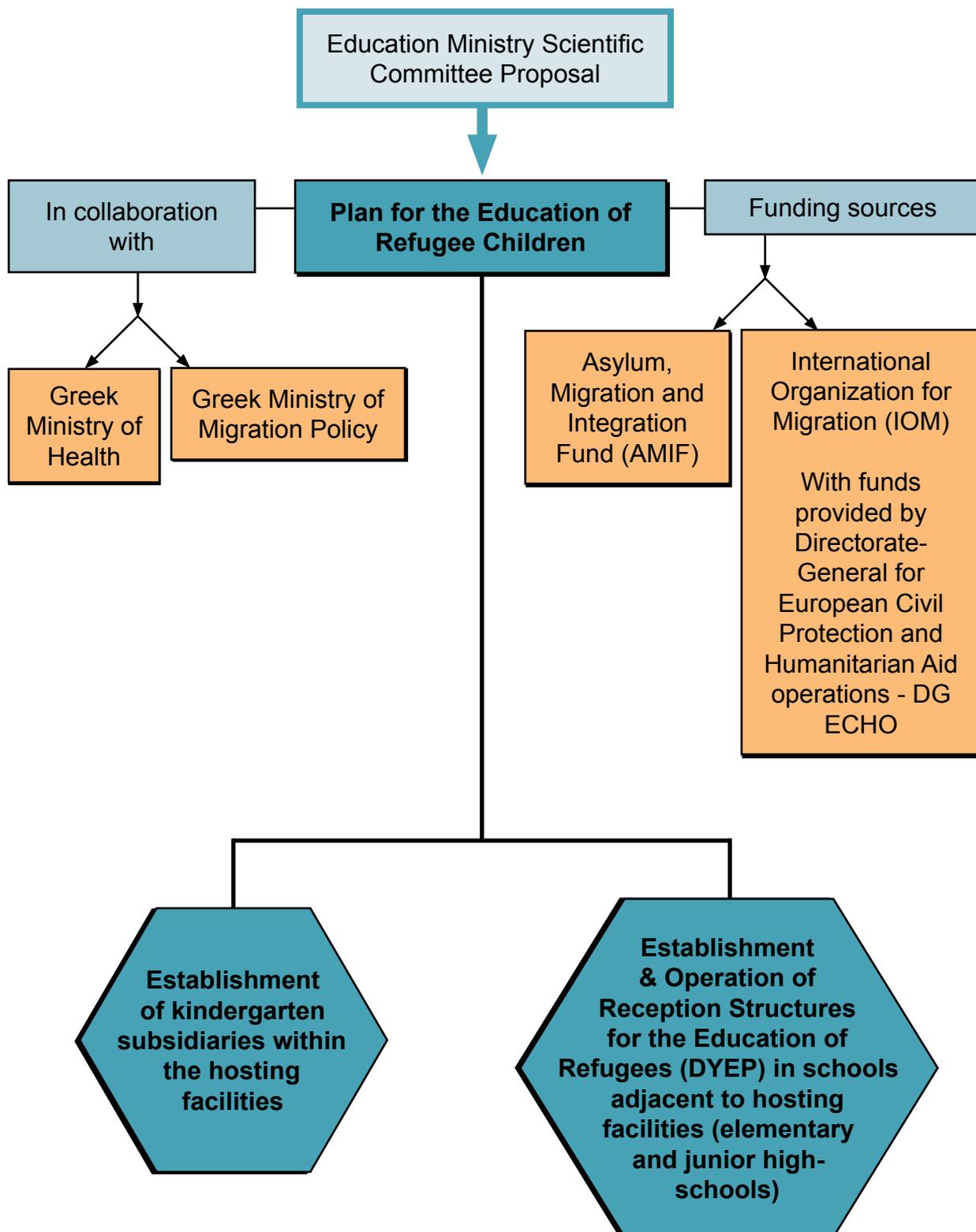
Sources: Ministry of Health- G.S. of Public Health, HCDCP



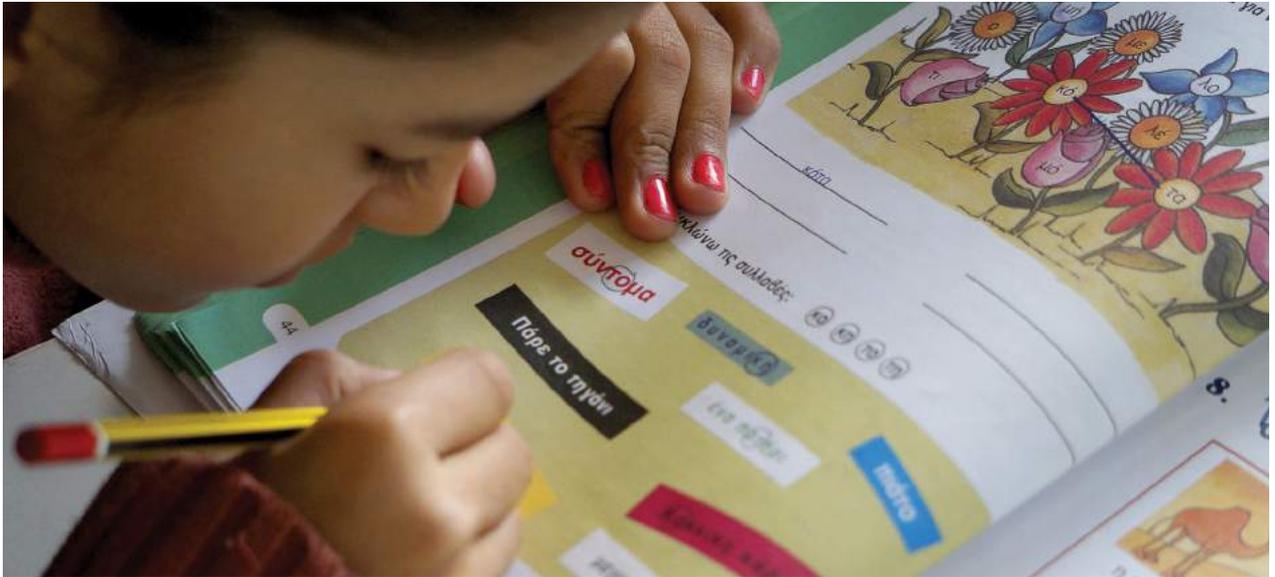
Health Care Unit for Refugees and Migrants at Amygdaleza, Attica (September, 2016). Source: ANA - MPA.

## REFUGEE CHILDREN EDUCATION

Taking into consideration that the number of refugees in Hosting Centers as well as the facilities' number and location are not stable, the **General Secretariat for Migration Policy**, responsible for social integration, in collaboration with the **Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs**, has drawn up a flexible action plan for the education of refugee children.



## The education plan for refugee children aims at:



Source: Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs

- **Safeguarding the right to education** that is every child's fundamental human right, including asylum seekers, according to European and national law.
- **Facilitating access to education for all minors** residing in **hosting facilities** in the country, which constitutes a duty and an obligation as well as a political decision of the Greek state.
- **Securing psychological support** and **integration of refugee children** into the **public education system**, following a transitional preparatory period.
- **Providing education** with a view to integrating minors either into the **Greek public education system** (2017-2018) or into the education system of another European country, **in case of their relocation**.
- **Tailoring the education program** according to age groups: a) children aged 4-5 attend kindergartens inside the Hosting Centers, so that they can stay close to their parents, b) children aged 6-12 enroll in **Reception Structures for the Education of Refugees (DYEP)** in nearby public elementary schools, c) children aged 13-15 enroll in DYEP in nearby public junior high schools d) children of all ages living outside refugee hosting facilities, in rented apartments or hotels, attend day classes in public schools and enroll in reception classes or afternoon DYEP.

- Providing **native language classes** for refugee children, organizing sports and artistic activities as well as creative and informal education programs, in cooperation with NGOs.

#### **Implementation of education plan for refugee children:**

- Up to now, more than **70 elementary and junior high school classes** are operating in 35 school units adjacent to 11 Hosting Centers
- **New reception Structures for the Education of Refugees (DYEP)** open on a weekly basis in school units across the country **depending on the vaccination coverage** of Hosting Centers.

**Source:** [Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs](#)

## **ASYLUM**

Since June 2016, Greece ranks fourth in number of completed registrations of asylum applications in the EU, whereas the number of asylum applications has risen to 132% during the first three months of 2016. The Greek Asylum Service has registered international protection applications as follows:

- **36,750 asylum applications** from 1.1.2016 until 31.10.2016
- **13,197 asylum applications** in 2015
- **1,501** have been granted **refugee status**, **213** have been granted **subsidiary protection**, while **5,263** applications were **rejected, at first instance**, from 1.1.2016 until 31.10.2016
- **133** have been granted **refugee status**, **5** have been granted **subsidiary protection**, and **686** applications were **rejected, at second instance**, out of a total of 5,968 applications, from 1.1.2016 until 31.10.2016

#### **The structure of the Greek Asylum Service:**

- **451 employees** currently, **201 new employees** by the end of 2016
- **(7) Regional Asylum Offices and (9) Asylum Units**
- **following the EU-Turkey Statement**, the Greek Asylum Service is assisted in its work, for a certain period of time, by **20 employees** of the European Asylum Support Service (EASO), **69 experts** and **83 interpreters** from EU member states (data until 27.9.2016)
- the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has also assigned 57 employees to assist the Greek Asylum Service in its work

However, additional personnel -mostly experts- is needed from the EU member states, as foreseen in the EU-Turkey Statement, in order to enhance the registration and examination of the large number of asylum applications.

### Examination of asylum applications:

- asylum applications are examined on an **individual basis** and according to **international human rights law**
- applicants are entitled to **free legal assistance** during the examination of their asylum applications at second instance
- **12 Independent Appeal Committees** -formed according to European standards (France, Germany, Sweden)- will enhance the second instance proceedings



*Pre-registration Center for Refugees and Migrants at Elliniko, Athens (June, 2016). Source: ANA -MPA.*

### Pre-registration (9.6 - 30.7.2016)

The Asylum Service implemented a pre-registration project in reception facilities in the mainland, in cooperation with the UNHCR and EASO, from 9.6.2016 until 30.7.2016. The pre-registration procedure was addressed to those who wished to:

- apply for international protection in Greece
- be included in the Relocation Program
- reunite with their families, in the framework of the Dublin Regulation
- return to their countries of origin
- **27,592 people have been pre-registered.** The project allowed for the identification of **1,225** unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable cases in priority.
- Pre-registered persons were provided with **asylum seeker cards**, allowing them to legally reside in Greece and have the right to access health and educational services until the asylum application procedure is completed.

The **registration and examination of all the applications** are in progress and **expected to be completed by spring 2017.**

## The Relocation Program

The **first relocation** of asylum seekers from Greece to another EU country took place on **November 4, 2015**, in the framework of the EU Relocation Program, which foresees the relocation of asylum seekers from one EU member state to another. Its purpose is to provide support to EU member states that have to manage the biggest refugee flows.

Since November 4, 2015:

- **5,843** people have already been **relocated to European countries** until November 27, 2016
- **18,448** people have been **included in the Relocation Program**
- **66,000** is the number of people **foreseen for relocation from Greece to other EU member states** during **2016 - 2017**, according to EU decisions
- **12,476** is the number of **relocation pledges from EU member states**, until November 27, 2016

The **Relocation Program** is based on **the principles of solidarity and fair distribution of responsibilities** among the EU member states. However, the Relocation Program has not yet been adequately implemented by all European member states. The following problems remain to be solved:

- insufficient number of relocation pledges from EU member states
- unfounded rejection of relocation claims
- low number of relocation pledges for unaccompanied minors

Source: *Greek Asylum Service*

**“The EU should finally realize that it has a duty to share the burden and the responsibility. The relocation procedure needs, as well, to be carried out. If from our side, as Europe, we do not stick to our commitments, if we do not implement this difficult agreement, then we will face again a major deadlock”.**



*(Statement of the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Summit on Migration along the Balkan route, 24.9.2016)*

## GREECE IS FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATIONS

Greece is fulfilling its obligations, mainly those that derive from the EU-Turkey Statement (March 18, 2016). Greece has adopted the necessary legal framework, always taking into account the international and European law, especially with respect to human rights protection.

Specifically, the Greek government:

- **created in relatively short time the necessary** hosting facilities for refugees and migrants, **closed makeshift and inappropriate settlements** and is **upgrading official structures** in order to improve living conditions
- **completed the pre-registration procedure of refugees and migrants in just two months**, with emphasis on the **mapping and prioritization of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable cases**
- **enhanced the Asylum Service** and **examines asylum applications** on an **individual basis** and in accordance with **international human rights law**
- **enacted legislation** in relation to the **examination of asylum applications at second instance**, increasing the number of Independent Appeal Committees and **accelerating procedures**
- **implements programs for refugee health care and medical treatment** as well as a **vaccination campaign for the refugee and migrant children** residing in Hosting Centers and other hosting facilities
- **ensures the right of education for all refugee children** – access to education for all minors residing in hosting facilities
- **takes care of unaccompanied children** by operating **special shelters**
- **cooperates with third countries and undertakes initiatives** concerning the **management of mixed migration flows**

The **implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement** is, so far, **quite satisfactory** and Greece is looking forward to the continuation of the good cooperation of all parties. Nevertheless, a number of **important challenges and difficulties** still remain, regarding **the implementation of the relocation program**, due to the insufficient number of relocation places that have been proposed by EU countries. There is also a pressing **need to accelerate the relocation procedure**, in order to reach the common European goals.

Moreover, in order to accelerate the registration and examination procedure of the large number of asylum applications, more staff and mainly asylum experts need to be deployed in Greece from EU member states, as it is foreseen in the EU-Turkey Statement.

According to the data:

- **777 foreigners** of various nationalities **have been returned to Turkey**, under the EU-Turkey Statement from 20.3.2016 until 12.12.2016
- **5,652 people** have **voluntarily returned to their country of origin**, through the International Organization for Migration, from 1.1.2016 until 25.11.2016, in the framework of a procedure that is not related to the EU-Turkey Statement

Sources: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Citizen Protection*

**“Together with the European and Turkish authorities, we are implementing the difficult but necessary EU-Turkey agreement. An agreement that has led to a drastic decrease in flows and - most importantly – in the number of deaths in the Aegean, having replaced the dangerous Aegean route with a legal one to Europe”.**



*(Speech of the Greek Prime Minister A. Tsipras, 71st UN General Assembly, 23.9.2016)*

## REFORM OF THE DUBLIN REGULATION

The **common asylum system** ought to focus on the **proportional distribution of asylum seekers among EU member states**, on the basis of solidarity and fair burden sharing, concerning both the examination of asylum applications and the return of those non eligible to their country of origin or to third countries.

- **Mandatory participation of member states to the allocation mechanism**, albeit in a gradual way, should be included in the draft of the Dublin IV Regulation.
- **The mandatory allocation mechanism should involve all asylum seekers** and not only those whose application has been considered admissible. Therefore, any alteration in this mechanism would deteriorate the situation in member states like Greece and Italy.
- Concerning the resumption of migrant transfers to Greece under the Dublin Regulation, it should be taken into account that **Greece is still under migration pressure** and that the principle of solidarity has not worked in practice, given that the relocation mechanism has not delivered the desired results.

*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

## GREECE PROMOTES COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

**Cooperating with third countries on Migration issue is of great importance.** Greece's goal is primarily the cooperation with Turkey, as well as with Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

At EU level, a number of Compacts have been signed with the Republic of Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia. Additional set of goals:

- Extending Compacts with Asian countries of migration origin and transit (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh)
- Reinforcing cooperation with Egypt for the control of migratory flows
- Cooperation with the Maghreb countries on readmission issues

At the same time, **initiatives on Tripartite Partnerships between Greece and Cyprus with Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt** include as a **permanent item on their meetings agenda the issue of managing mixed migration flows.**

### Greek Initiatives in 2016

#### 1st Mediterranean EU Countries' Summit- Athens Declaration, September 9, 2016

The Heads of State and Governments of the Mediterranean EU Countries agreed on the **necessity of a comprehensive EU migration policy** which should include:

- A **more effective and more convergent European system of asylum by reviewing the Dublin system,**
- The **reinforcement of the EU external border security,**

- Pursuing the **implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement** in order to continue to prevent tragic deaths and migration flows in the Aegean,
- The **fight against irregular migration** by establishing robust readmission and return frameworks,
- The **reinforcement of cooperation** in the Mediterranean and with African countries.

### Rhodes Conference on Security and Stability- Rhodes, September 8-9, 2016

Ministerial and High Official Meeting on a wide range of issues pertaining to security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region and beyond, more pointedly on aspects of the current migration and refugee crisis.

### Quadrilateral meeting between Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and FYROM- Thessaloniki, April 21-22, 2016

Meeting of Foreign Affairs and Interior Ministers with a view to jointly tackling the challenges posed by the current migration and refugee crisis in the region.

### Trilateral meeting between Greece, Albania and Italy- Athens, April 14, 2016

Trilateral consultations on ministerial level regarding better coordination to combat migrant trafficking rings, cooperation on readmission issues to the countries of origin, as well as offering know-how to Albania on asylum issues.

Sources: Prime Minister of Greece website, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Ζάππειο Μέγαρο, κοινές δηλώσεις κατά τη Σύνοδο των ηγετών των Μεσογειακών Χωρών της Ε.Ε. στην Αθήνα (9 Σεπτεμβρίου 2016). Πηγή: ΑΠΕ-ΜΠΕ.

# FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE REFUGEE/ MIGRANT CRISIS

## National Programs

### Asylum, Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF): € 294.5 M

- Covering reception of 8,500 asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors (throughout 2017)
- Strengthening asylum procedure in line with the European standards
- Integration policies

### Internal Security Fund (ISF): € 214.7 M

- Implementing National Security Strategy
- Control of the external borders

The **National Funds Programs** for **2014-2020** have a total public expenditure –i.e. both **EU and national contribution-** of **509.5 million euros**.

**Greece** has been awarded **70 million euros** to in the form of pre-financing payment and annual installments from both Funds.

## Emergency Assistance

The **EU Commission** has **allocated** and **gradually awards** to the Greek authorities, in the course of 2016, **178 million euros** (through the Emergency Assistance AMIF and ISF).

*Source: Special Secretariat for the Coordination and Management of the National Programs of AMIF / ISF.*

## Refugee-Migration Issue: Present & Future

(by Ioannis Mouzalas, Migration Policy Minister)



In Greece we are hosting today about 60,000 refugees and migrants, 12,000 of which are on the islands.

The current picture has been shaped following the achievement of three “records”, as I often say.

The first record relates to the way and time taken to evacuate the area of Idomeni - just three months after the Visegrad countries unilaterally decided to close their borders, with the dramatic consequences we all know. At that time, about 60,000 people were left stranded in Greece. If one took into consideration factors such as area, population, GDP and levels of unemployment, the equivalent number in Germany would be 580,000 and in France 520,000. If only area and population were considered, the numbers would be 350,000 in Germany and 320,000 in France, respectively. We tried hard and managed to transfer the stranded population to specially designed camps, with the decisive help of the Greek police and without the slightest incident.

The second record relates to the pre-registration of asylum seeking refugees and migrants. Within 55 days (from June 6 to July 30, 2016) 27,592 refugees underwent pre-registration. Up to then (June 6) another 33,000 had pre-registered via various ways (by skype, through Regional Asylum Offices etc.). It is worth mentioning that, apart from the pre-registration process, in 2016 there was a 246% increase in asylum claims compared to 2015.

The third record relates to the fact that 9 months after the borders closed, the children of refugees and migrants started attending school and our aim is to get as many as we can to go to school in the coming months. At the same time, we are proceeding to establishing schools and kindergartens inside the camps.

From now on, we aim to improve living conditions for the people who remain in our country. But to ensure this, the number of newcomers must remain low, as it is today thanks to the EU-Turkey Statement.

We would like to remind all those who tend to forget it, that it is the EU-Turkey Statement that has reduced the flows from 5-7,000 a day to a mere 93. Greece as an EU member is doing its part towards the Statement’s fulfillment; the other stakeholders must also fulfill their commitments.

## **We claim “a Europe of cohesion and of the Enlightenment”**

2017 is a year of many and important challenges. Before the end of 2016, we are aiming for the total population of refugees and migrants to be housed in appropriate prefab houses instead of tents.

In 2017 we seek to gradually reduce the number of camps. For this reason, we are proceeding with a plan to create 8,500 accommodation places for asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, following a call for expression of interest by the competent Special Secretariat for the Coordination and Management of the National Programs of AMIF / ISF. This is addressed to potential local administration bodies, international organizations, legal persons governed by public law, NGOs, charities etc., and supervised by the Ministry of Migration Policy Reception Directorate. We support the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) program for an additional 20,000 accommodation places.

Concerning the Dublin Regulation, as of March 15, 2017, some categories of people, reaching Europe via our country from this date on, may be returned to Greece (subject to reexamination every time and without retrospective implementation of the measure, however). Greece, in this case, will decide whether to accept them or not. In the current situation, when some member states are trying to push forward decisions for the return of all those who had previously passed through Greece, the agreement reached on the Dublin regulation is the most balanced approach, in the interests of the country.

Targeted propaganda on alleged secondary routes from Greece’s northern borders to other member states is clearly groundless. Were this true, we wouldn’t have any refugees and migrants left in Greece. In any case, to avoid the emergence of such phenomena, we have asked, since September 2016, the assistance of Frontex in order to check, register and reduce potential flows, which means Europe needs to assume its responsibility.

2017 will be a crucial year to tackle the refugee crisis. The faster implementation of the relocation scheme from Greece to EU countries, so as to reach the 30,000 target set for the year, as well as the strengthening of Asylum Services with personnel specialized in examining asylum claims, are important elements for the successful management of the refugee crisis. Together we are making the effort and together we will succeed in “a Europe of cohesion and of the Enlightenment”.

# MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS – RESPONSES BY THE GREEK GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Things to know about General Secretariat for Media & Communication and its mission:

It **facilitates journalists** and **international Media** with material, **interviews** or **filming permits** procedures etc. and brings media professionals in contact with government officials.

It informs international public opinion on **national positions** and **Greek activities** through the channels of its **Press & Communication Offices Abroad** network.

It offers **news and information material** covering developments in **contemporary Greece** through **online platforms, available in five foreign languages (Greek News Agenda, Grèce Hebdo, Griechenland Aktuell, Panorama Griego and Punto Grecia)**, as well as through social media accounts.

On **www.media.gov.gr**, the website of General Secretariat for Media & Communication, you can find **useful and daily updated information on refugee flows** to the Eastern Aegean islands is offered through **Summary Statements** provided by the **Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management**.

## “Addressing the challenge”

(Message by Dr Lefteris Kretsos, General Secretary for Media & Communication)



“Managing the refugee and migrant crisis has been a tremendous communication challenge for Greece; a challenge shaped by three key factors:

First, the need to ensure that migrants’ and asylum seekers’ human rights as well as Greece’s obligations under international law are respected.

Second, safeguarding the security of both refugees-migrants and EU citizens.

Third, displaying genuine and practical solidarity despite the serious financial difficulties Greece is facing.

We have addressed and we are still managing this crisis with human values and the concern for those in need at the center of our efforts.

Helping refugees and migrants in Greece is an ongoing struggle. Our daily concern is to bring out the humane face of Greece, a country that has exerted itself, has been proving negative stereotypes wrong and addresses contemporary challenges with solidarity and responsibility.”