

GATWICK DETAINEES WELFARE GROUP



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INFORMATION PACK ABOUT GREECE

We are sorry to hear about what has happened, and wish you luck when you arrive in Greece.

This is to help you when you arrive there. Keep this document with you when you travel, as it contains some useful information, such as:

- 1. Why you are being sent to Greece**
- 2. The Greek asylum system**
- 3. Organisations in Greece that can help you**
- 4. Some useful words and sentences in Greek**
- 5. Map**

1. WHY YOU ARE BEING SENT TO GREECE

You are being sent to Greece because of something called the **DUBLIN CONVENTION**. This is an agreement made by the countries in the European Union in the year 1990. Since February 2003, The Dublin Convention is also called “**DUBLIN II**”.

The European countries that belong to the **EUROPEAN UNION** are:

- Great Britain
- The Republic of Ireland
- France
- Austria
- Belgium
- Luxembourg
- Italy
- Spain
- Portugal
- Netherlands
- Greece
- Denmark
- Sweden
- Finland
- Germany
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Latvia
- Hungary
- Malta
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Lithuania

Before, all these countries were very different from each other, and each country had its own separate laws. Now, because all these countries belong to the European Union, they share many laws. For example, they all share the law called the ‘Dublin Convention’

- **Dublin Convention says that only one country in the European Union should be responsible for your asylum application.**

This means that you cannot ask for asylum in Italy *and* in Great Britain, for example. You can only ask for asylum in one of those two countries – the first you arrived in.

- **The Dublin Convention also says that you should ask for asylum in the first European Union country that you enter.**

This means that you cannot choose which country in Europe to ask for asylum in. This is because the Dublin Convention says that all the countries in the European Union are safe. Therefore, it says that you should ask for asylum in the first European Union country you arrive in. (Often, this is not really the first European Union country you arrived in, but the first country where you came into contact with immigration officials and where your fingerprints were taken.)

- **According to the Dublin Convention, when you ask for asylum in a European Union country, that country must find out if you were in *another* European Union country before arriving.**

So, when you asked for asylum in Great Britain, the Home Office (who deals with your asylum application) saw that your fingerprints were taken in Italy. Because Italy is a European Union country, the Dublin Convention says that your asylum case should be looked at there, because it is a safe country.

REMEMBER: Cases like yours, where you are sent to another European Union country because of the Dublin Convention, are called THIRD COUNTRY CASES. So, the Home Office has decided that your claim for asylum in Great Britain is a ‘Third Country Case’. Unfortunately, you have no right to appeal this decision in the UK but only AFTER you have left the UK. In reality, this rarely happens.

2.The Greek Asylum System

Greece's asylum system recognises the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as well as the New York Protocol of 1967. In short this means that asylum can be granted to someone when it is proved that he or she is in danger of persecution in the country of origin. As part of the European Union, Greece has signed on the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Convention. There are a number of in-state legislation which would be explained to you if you were to seek legal advice in the country.

The Asylum Section – Dublin Unit of the Aliens Division of the Ministry of Public Order handles claims or requests to take over or take back an asylum applicant.

The majority of asylum seekers within the Dublin procedure are from Iraq although there are also a significant number from the former Soviet Republics and Chechnya. Applicants processed under the Dublin Convention are entitled to the same social rights as other asylum seekers.

Unfamiliar with the asylum procedure in Greece and often lacking accommodation or other support, many asylum seekers leave the country in search of protection and assistance elsewhere in Europe.

Recognition rates in Greece are comparatively much lower than in the European average. rejection rates in Greece are the highest throughout Europe.

In 2004, Greece received over 1,300 requests to take back asylum seekers who had applied for asylum first in Greece before moving on to other EU countries and trying again. Asylum seekers who are returned from other EU countries often find that the examination of their claim was interrupted and therefore, under Greek law, will not be resumed. Also due to lack of sufficient trained staff and interpreters, applicants have to wait many months before they are interviewed. Once an asylum seeker has been interviewed and if provided with the 'pink card', only then they are given the right to work and the right to free medical care. Negative decisions can be appealed within 30 days. Under certain conditions the opportunity is given for a second appeal. An application for asylum from an applicant from a 'safe third country' i.e. Dublin cases are dealt with as a priority.

One of the most worrying aspects of the asylum legislation in Greece is the provision, which allows the authorities to "interrupt" the examination of asylum claims. The most commonly stated reason for such "interruption" appears to be a change of residential address, including cases where asylum applicants have travelled to other European destinations and have been returned to Greece under the Dublin II Regulation.(24). This then leads to a decision of rejection by the authorities after the lapse of the designated three-month period of appeal, and in such cases the authorities refuse to examine in full asylum applications upon the applicant's return to Greece and instead issue immediate deportation orders.

No financial assistance is granted to asylum seekers by the Greek state.

However, the Greek Council for Refugees provides free legal assistance to asylum seekers during all stages of the determination procedure. Applicants are also entitled to receive legal counselling at any stage of the claim's procedure by the GCR and the Athens Bar Association, or Amnesty and other NGO's.

Provided by refugee assisting NGOs

. The financial assistance program run by the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and the Social Work Foundation (SWF) covers Convention refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian cases on an emergency basis only and for a limited number of cases. The persons deemed vulnerable and thus eligible for emergency financial assistance are single parents, old people without family support, persons with chronic physical or mental illness, unaccompanied minors, torture victims who are unable to work, as well as women at risk.

Unaccompanied Minors:

There are several institutions in Greece that provide shelter to unaccompanied minors and some of them exclusively house unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. More precisely:

Public institutions

- The National Youth Foundation (Ethniko Idryma Neotitas) runs a hostel in Kriti island exclusively for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. Capacity: 20 persons.
- The Centre for Childcare (Kentro Paidikis Merimnas) in Lamia, belonging to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, provides housing to unaccompanied minor asylum seekers alongside other minors. Capacity: 30 persons.
- The Aghia Barbara Special Professional School (formerly Ossifogleio) in Athens, also belongs to the Ministry of Health and Welfare and can temporarily host unaccompanied minor asylum seekers alongside other minors.
- The Pikermi hostel (see above) hosts unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and single women.

Private institutions:

- The Social Work Foundation (Idryma Koinonikis Ergasias) runs a hostel in Athens exclusively hosting unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

- The Association for Childcare (Syllogos Merimnis Anilikon) runs a hostel in Athens which can host unaccompanied minor asylum seekers alongside other minors

The Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) will refer unaccompanied minor asylum seekers to these hostels, or in cases where they are all full, will refer them to other hostels, which do not exclusively host minors. In 2001, GCR found accommodation for 121 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, and for 83 in 2002. The majority are hosted in the Naysika hostel of temporary accommodation or in the National Youth Foundation hostel.

Accommodation on arrival: (run by NGO's)

- **Nea Makri reception Centre, run by Red Cross**
- **Penteli Reception Centre, run by Mediciens du Monde**
- **Koinonini Allilegyi reception centre in Thessaloniki, north of Greece**
- **Sperhiada reception centre in the city of Lamia (Red Cross)**
- **Kokkinopoulos reception centre for single men and families (near the city of Elassona)**
- **Ethelontiki Ergasia hostel in Athens**
- **Pikermi hostel fro newcomer unaccompanied minors and women.**
- **The Social Work Foundation runs a programme called "nefeli", which subsidizes the first 6 months of asylum seekers private accommodation rent.**

******* Number of places on all above centres very limited*******

3. Organisations

Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture

9 Lycabettous St., 106 72 Athens
E-mail: mrct@mrct.org
Tel.: 0030 210 3646807, 3643792
Fax: 0030 210 3644366

Greek Council for Refugees

25 Solomou Street
106 82 Athens
Telephone: +30 1 380-2508/ 7645
Fax: +30 1 380 3774
E-mail: gcr1@gcr.gr
Website: <http://www.gcr.gr/>

Amnesty International

30 Sina Street
Athens
106-72 Greece
Tel:+ 30 21 0360 0628

Jesuit Refugee Service

Smyrnis Street 27
GR-10439
Tel: + 30 210 883 59 11

This is a Christian organisation but may be able to put you in contact with other sources of help

Red Cross

Caritas

52, Kapodistriou Street in downtown Athens. For more information, ring +30 210 524 7879, fax +30 210 524 7990, E-mail: info@caritas.gr or visit <http://www.caritas.gr/indexen.html>.

SOS Children's Village

The group's office is located at 6, Ermou Street, Syntagma Square, central Athens. *May be able to help under 18's?*

Iranian churches in Greece

Persian Christian Fellowship in Athens

Sunday Service: 5:00 - 7:00 PM (in Persian )

Monday Prayer Night and Bible Study: 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Tuesday and Thursdays: Discipleship Classes (NLTC-GCTC) 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Address:

Helping Hands
Sofokleous 53-D 1st floor
10553 Omonia, Athens, Greece



0030-694 622 6601



0030-210 322 4216



athensiranians@yahoo.com

Persian Christian Fellowship of Thessaloniki

Thessaloniki, Greece

Sunday Service: 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Monday Prayer: 8:00 - 10:00 PM

Tuesday Bible Study: 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Thursday Meeting: 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Friday Prayer and Bible Study: 8:00 - 10:00 PM

Address:

Apostolic Church Pentecostian
AGAPI ,4 THESSALONIKI GREECE



(0030)-(2310)-(239 837) MOBILE NO :(0030)-(942 869 513)



aubijohn@hotmail.com

4. Some useful words/phrases

Aerodromio = airport

Ellada = Greece

Kalimera = Goodmorning

Parakalo = Please / Efharisto = Thank you

Ne = Yes / Ohi = No

Pos ipate? = What did you say? Ti? = What?

Den milao Ellinika = I don't speak Greek

Den katalaveno = I don't understand

Ime profigas = I am an asylum seeker

Thelo na zitiso politico asilo = I would like to ask for asylum

Eho erthi apo tin Agglia = I have come from England

Den gnorizo kanenan stin Ellada = I don't know anyone in Greece

Borite na me voithisete? = Can you help me please?

Den eho lefta = I don't have any money

Hriazome nomiki voithia = I need legal help

Den eho pou na kimitho = I have nowhere to sleep

Efharisto gia tin voithias sas = Thank you for your help

5. MAP

