

# Info-Sheet: Asylum in Greece

(Latest update: 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2016)

## Who can apply for asylum?

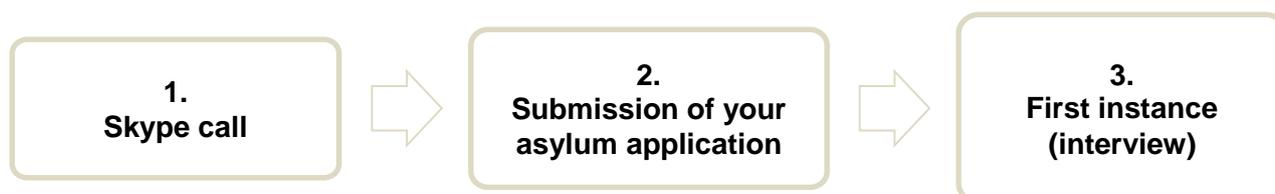
Any foreign person can apply for asylum in Greece. The access to the asylum system is free of charge. In the asylum procedure it will be important to state why and in which way you are persecuted in your home country:

- if your life, physical integrity, personal freedom and/or other basic human rights are endangered,
- if you are persecuted due to personal attributes (skin color, sex, sexual orientation, nationality) or your political or religious beliefs.

Please be aware that right now the whole asylum procedure may take several months to be processed.

## How does the procedure work?

The Asylum procedure is currently being processed in three steps.



## How to apply

### 1. Skype call

**As a very first step**, you have to arrange an appointment with the Greek Asylum Service via Skype. The only way to arrange this appointment is via Skype. In this call you will be given an appointment in one of the regional asylum offices listed below in order to submit your asylum application.

The costs of the transport to your appointment will not be covered by the Greek Asylum Service. You will have to pay it by yourself. Do not miss this appointment!

For refugees staying in the camps in Idomeni, Neo Kavala and the gas station at Polykastro the nearest asylum office is in Thessaloniki.

**Please be aware that you will be given an appointment in the regional asylum office you call via Skype.** If you call the asylum office in Athens, you will also have to go to Athens to submit your application.

Skype call times for applications at the asylum office in Athens:

**Arabic:** Monday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 12<sup>00</sup>; Tuesday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 11<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.arabic

**Farsi/Dari:** Monday, 13<sup>00</sup> - 14<sup>00</sup>; Tuesday and Wednesday, 12<sup>00</sup> - 13<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.farsi.dari

**Urdu:** Wednesday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 11<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.urdu

**English/Français:** Monday, 12<sup>00</sup> - 13<sup>00</sup>; Wednesday, 11<sup>00</sup> - 12<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service

Skype call times for applications at the asylum offices in Thessaloniki and the rest of Greece:

**Arabic:** Thursday, 09<sup>00</sup> - 10<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.arabic

**Farsi/Dari:** Thursday, 13<sup>00</sup> - 14<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.farsi.dari

**Urdu:** Thursday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 11<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.urdu

**English/Français:** Thursday, 12<sup>00</sup> - 13<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service

## **Fast-Track-Procedure (for Syrians only)**

There is a fast-track procedure that applies to all Syrian nationals who wish to lodge an asylum application for the first time before the Greek Asylum Service and hold original passports. The passport does not have to be valid. National identification cards are not accepted. Under this procedure, both registration and decision on your application take place within the same day. At the moment 99,5 % of Syrians applying are also granted asylum (according to information provided by the asylum office in Athens).

Skype call times for applications at the asylum office in Athens:

Monday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 12<sup>00</sup>; Tuesday, 10<sup>00</sup> - 11<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.arabic

Tuesday and Wednesday, 13<sup>00</sup> - 14<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.syria

Skype call times for applications at the asylum offices in Thessaloniki and the rest of Greece:

Thursday, 09<sup>00</sup> - 10<sup>00</sup>; user ID: asylum.service.arabic

**VERY IMPORTANT! At the moment it is very difficult to reach the asylum office via Skype due to a lack of capacity to answer all calls. Keep trying to call them as it is a crucial step to begin the process.**

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## **2. Submission of your asylum application**

On the appointment at the regional asylum office your photograph will be taken and you will have to provide detailed information about yourself. You will have to hand in ...

- your travel documents (passport) or any other relevant document,
- your verification and the ones of your family members' identity,
- your country of origin,
- your family status.

In case of language barriers an interpreter will assist you.

When submitting your application you will have to answer all questions asked by the Greek Asylum Service staff with absolute sincerity. If you provide false evidence or make false claims, this will have a negative effect on the judgment of your case. You may be bodily searched and your personal belongings may be investigated. You may also be submitted to medical examinations.

You will also be given another date and time for a personal interview (first instance) and receive your international protection applicants card which will be valid for six months. You must carry this card on you at all times.

**Attention!** As soon as you are given the international protection applicants card and you know the day of your interview, you should contact one of the Greek NGOs working with

asylum seekers (e. g. “The Greek Council for Refugees”) where you can be properly and timely prepared for your interview.

Until the examination of your application is completed ...

- you may move freely in Greece,
- you have the right to work,
- you have the right to receive hospital and medical treatment free of charge,
- you and your children have access to the public educational system free of charge,
- you are not allowed to travel outside Greece.

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### **3. First instance (interview)**

On the date given when you submitted your application you will have an interview at the Greek Asylum Service to examine your case. It is called first instance. Do not miss this interview!

You will have to answer all questions with absolute sincerity. The questions regarding your application will include information ...

- on your identity,
- on how you came to Greece,
- on the reasons why you left your country of origin and
- the reasons why you cannot return to your home country.

In case of language barriers an interpreter will assist you. You can also attend the interview accompanied by a lawyer or other counsellor (legal expert, doctor, psychologist or social worker).

During the interview you may also submit any other evidence you consider necessary. Be careful on what you state, try to be as clear and as precise as possible. The interview is confidential but can be shared with other Greek authorities.

Everyone understands that when you arrive in a new country you need to find a job in order to survive. But during your asylum examination the priority is to explain why your life was endangered and why you were forced to leave your home country. Be prepared to state everything important as you might not get asked for everything.

### **Decision**

Following the interview (first instance) the Greek Asylum Service will decide to grant you refugee status, subsidiary protection or reject your application.

When a decision upon your application is issued, the Greek Asylum Service will notify you to receive it. You will be notified based on the contact information you have declared, either by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail.

**If you have changed your address or your telephone number, please immediately notify the Greek Asylum Service.**

If you have not received any decision and at the same time do not renew your international protection applicants card until the next business day after its expiry date, the Greek Asylum

Service will assume that you have received a decision. While the examination of your application is pending, you can withdraw it at any time.

### **After a positive decision**

If you are **granted refugee status** or **subsidiary protection**, you will be entitled to remain in the country for three years. You have the right to access the education, health care, the labor market and social security system.

- You will be given a residence permit for three years.
- Upon request, you will be provided with travel documents that allow you to travel abroad.
- You have the right to work under the conditions set by Greek law.
- As an employed person you will have the same rights and obligations, regarding e. g. social security, as any Greek citizen.
- You have the right to receive hospital, medical and pharmaceutical treatment free of charge, provided that you are uninsured and indigent.
- You and your children have access to the public educational system free of charge.
- You have the right to access a vocational training.

If you are granted asylum – not if you are granted subsidiary protection – you may also apply for a refugee passport. It might take several months until you receive it. This passport allows you to travel anywhere – except for your home country. According to information provided by a lawyer of UNHCR this means that with the refugee passport you can travel up to three months, then you have to be in Greece for at least six months until you can travel another three months.

### **After a negative decision**

If your **application is rejected**, you have the right to submit an appeal to the Greek Appeals Authority. If you do not submit an appeal and you do not have a document permitting your stay in the country, the process for the return/deportation to your country of origin will begin or continue.

In case your appeal is rejected, you may submit an application of revocation (cancellation) to the appropriate court of law. The cancellation application does not have an automatic suspensive effect, meaning that you still can be deported.

If you do not submit an application of revocation or if it is rejected and you do not have a document permitting your stay in the country, the process for the return/deportation to your country of origin will begin or continue. Furthermore, you will be given information on the possibility of a voluntary return to your country of origin.

Throughout the whole procedure you have the right to ask for the support of a lawyer or any other counsellor of your choice. The fee and expenses of the lawyer or counsellor will be completely at your own cost.

## **Asylum Services in Greece**

### **Regional Asylum Office of Athens**

P. Kanellopoulou 2, Athens 10177

Tel.: (0030) 210 698 8500

Help line with recorded information for asylum seekers in ten languages: (0030) 210 69 88 660

E-Mail: [asylo@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:asylo@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Thessaloniki**

Building of former «B KTEO»

Pontou Street, Kalochori Thessaloniki 54001

Tel.: (0030) 2310-751775

E-Mail: [pga.thessalonikis@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.thessalonikis@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Lesbos**

Nationality Identification Center

Moria, Lesbos 81100

Tel.: (0030) 22510 32323

E-Mail: [pga.lesvou@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.lesvou@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Northern Evros**

Special Detention Center for Foreigners

Fylakio. Orestiada 68006

Tel.: (0030) 2552095180

E-Mail: [pga.evrou@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.evrou@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Southern Evros**

Makris Avenue 1-B, Nea Chili, Alexandroupolis 68100

Tel: (0030) 25510 35170

E-Mail: [pga.alexandroupolis@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.alexandroupolis@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Rhodes**

Rhodes Traffic Police Building

Eleftherias Square 1, Rhodes 85100

Tel.: (0030) 22410 30278

E-Mail: [pga.rodou@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.rodou@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Regional Asylum Office of Samos**

Themistokli Sofouli Street, Samos 83100

Tel.: (0030) 22730-81540

E-Mail: [pga.samou@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.samou@asylo.gov.gr)

### **Reception and Nationality Identification Center of Chios**

E-Mail: [pga.chiou@asylo.gov.gr](mailto:pga.chiou@asylo.gov.gr)

## **NGOs supporting refugees with legal aid**

### **AITIMA**

*Legal and material assistance to asylum seekers and refugees*

Tripou 4-6, Koukaki, Athens 11741

Tel.: (0030) 2109241677 / (0030) 6989764598

### **European Asylum Support Office (EASO)**

*Asylum Support Team Thessaloniki*

Tel.: (0030) 6989764598

E-Mail: [cos.thessaloniki@easo.europe.eu](mailto:cos.thessaloniki@easo.europe.eu)

### **Ecumenical Refugee Program**

*Legal assistance to asylum seekers and refugees.*

*Mondays, 11<sup>00</sup> - 16<sup>00</sup>; Wednesdays - Fridays, 10<sup>00</sup> - 14<sup>00</sup>*

Iridanou Str. 4A, Athens 11528  
Tel.: (0030) 210-7295926  
E-Mail: [ecrp@acn.gr](mailto:ecrp@acn.gr)

**Greek Council for Refugees**

*Legal counselling and social assistance free of charge.*

Solomou Str. 25, Athens 10682  
Kassandrou 37A, Thessaloniki 54633  
Tel.: (0030) 2103800990

**Group of Lawyers for the rights of refugees and migrants**

*Wednesdays, 17<sup>00</sup> - 19<sup>00</sup>*

Iouliauou 11 & Rethymnou Str., Exarheia, Athens 10682  
<http://omadadikigorwnenglish.blogspot.com/>

